Heartland Genealogy Blog Posts May-June 2025

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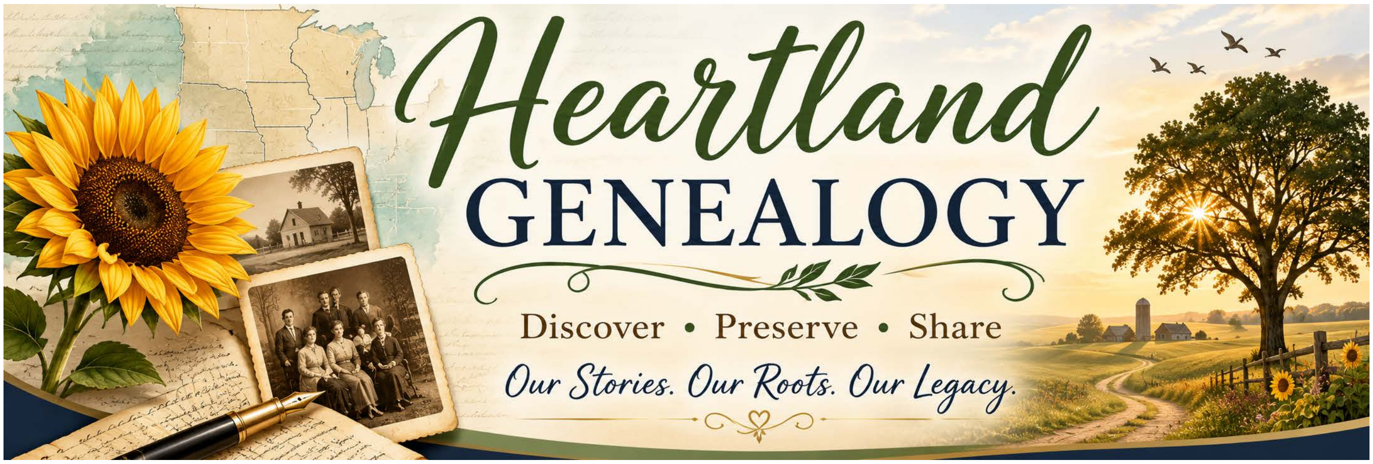
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Confirming Hints

By Marcia Crawford Philbrick
May 1, 2025
Nafus
https://heartlandgenealogy.org/2025/05/01/confirming-hints/

HEARTLAND
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Nafus Family

Nafus Family on Heartland Genealogy

Confirming Ancestry Hints with Local Records and Obituaries

Do you use Ancestry's hinting system in your research? When working on descendancy projects, I often rely on these hints to guide my investigation. However, experience has taught me to approach them with a healthy dose of skepticism—especially after encountering a census hint for someone who was already deceased!

That caution kicked in again as I reviewed hints for **Daniel Robert Bryant** [KC4S-VZ3], my 2nd cousin 3 times removed. Many of his hints pointed to records in Porter County, Indiana, which matched much of the family structure listed on the FamilySearch tree. But then, a 1920 census record placed the family in **Kansas**, raising questions. Was this the same Daniel Bryant? And a hint suggesting he died in **Tennessee** only deepened my uncertainty.

A Breakthrough: The Knoxville Obituary

Then I found a game-changing hint: an obituary from *The Knoxville Journal*. It helped tie everything together.

DANIEL R. BRYANT
Daniel R. Bryant, 77, died at 2:45 a.m. Monday at his home, No. 209 Shipman Place, after an illness of only a few days. Mr. Bryant formerly lived in Kansas and Indiana and moved to Knoxville about five years ago.

He is survived by his widow, Mrs. Sara D. Bryant; one daughter, Mrs. Roy E. Hutchens, of Knoxville; and three sons, DeForest Bryant, of Gary, Ind.; C. C. and W. A. Bryant, both of Hebron, Ind.

Funeral services will be held at 2:30 p.m. Wednesday at the home of his daughter, Mrs. Hutchens, of Beverly Road. Burial will be in Greenwood Cemetery.

This obituary identified all three sons and their Indiana residences—helping confirm that this was indeed the same Daniel Bryant tied to the Porter County records. Even better, the mention of Kansas as a previous residence offered compelling support for the 1920 census record from **Labette County, Kansas**.

Additional Confirmation from Local News

To solidify the connection, I searched Kansas newspapers from the same era. That search yielded another gem—a 1924 announcement about Daniel's daughter:

GETS GOOD APPOINTMENT
Miss Helen Bryant Has Accepted a Position in School of Phrenology at Knoxville, Tenn.

Miss Helen Bryant of this city, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. D. R. Bryant, of southwest of town, has secured a position as an assistant professor in a College of Phrenology at Knoxville, Tenn., a coveted position with opportunities for advancement. Miss Bryant is just completing her college work in Kansas University and will receive her degree at the coming commencement there.

This article not only places the Bryant family in Labette County, Kansas in the early 1920s, but it also explains their move to **Knoxville, Tennessee**, perfectly aligning with the obituary five years later.

Final Thoughts

Ancestry hints are incredibly useful—but they're just that: *hints*, not proof. It takes extra steps, like consulting obituaries and local newspapers, to truly connect the dots. In this case, those extra efforts helped confirm that the Daniel Robert Bryant in Kansas, Indiana, and Tennessee was indeed the same man.

Your Turn

How do you verify Ancestry hints in your research? Have you found local newspapers or obituaries helpful in confirming identities? Share your experiences in the comments!

Friday Find: Social Security Application

By Marcia Crawford Philbrick
May 2, 2025
Mentzer
https://heartlandgenealogy.org/2025/05/02/friday-find-social-security-application/

FRIDAY FINDS
FRIDAY FINDS
HEARTLAND GENEALOGY BLOG

Discovering a Social Security Application in My Files

Have you ever requested an “Application for Social Security Account Number” (Form SS-5) from the Social Security Administration? Back in 2001, I submitted such a request for one of my mother’s cousins. That application is likely one of the few physical copies in my personal files.

When I compared the information from the original application to the details available through the *Social Security Applications and Claims Index* (found online), I noticed only a few pieces of information present on the form but missing from the database:

- Age at last birthday
- Worker’s home address
- Employer’s name and address
- Date signed
- Applicant’s signature

To preserve this document, I asked ChatGPT to transcribe the handwritten application. It completed the task with only a couple of minor corrections needed. Below is the corrected transcription:

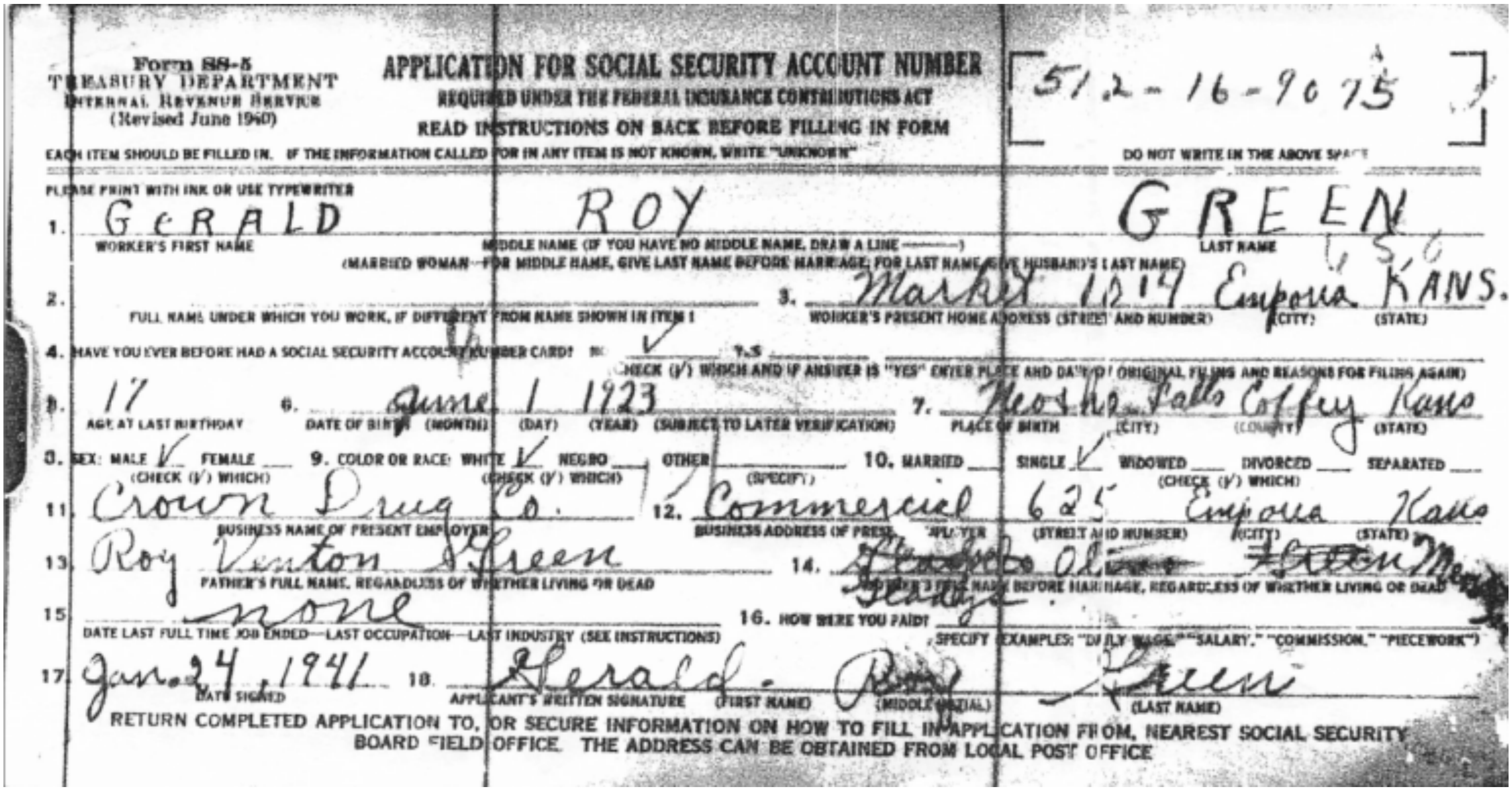
Form SS-5

Treasury Department
Internal Revenue Service (Revised June 1940)

Application for Social Security Account Number
(Required under the Federal Insurance Contributions Act)

(Read instructions on back before filling in form)

- **Worker's First Name:** GERALD
- **Middle Name:** ROY
- **Last Name:** GREEN
- **Full Name Under Which You Work (if different):** (blank)
- **Worker's Present Home Address:** 417 Market St., Emporia, Kansas
- **Have you ever had a Social Security Account Number?** No
- **Age at Last Birthday:** 17
- **Date of Birth:** January 1, 1923
- **Place of Birth:** Neosho Falls, Coffey County, Kansas
- **Sex:** Male
- **Color or Race:** White
- **Marital Status:** Single
- **Business Name of Present Employer:** Crown Drug Co.
- **Business Address:** 625 Commercial, Emporia, Kansas
- **Father's Full Name:** Roy Vinton Green
- **Mother's Full Name Before First Marriage:** Gladys Olive Mentzer
- **Date Last Full-Time Job Ended – Last Occupation – Last Industry:** None
- **How Were You Paid:** (blank)
- **Date Signed:** June 24, 1941
- **Applicant's Written Signature:** Gerald Roy Green
- **Social Security Number (assigned):** 572-16-9075



Form SS-5
TREASURY DEPARTMENT
INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE
(Revised June 1940)

APPLICATION FOR SOCIAL SECURITY ACCOUNT NUMBER
REQUIRED UNDER THE FEDERAL INSURANCE CONTRIBUTIONS ACT
READ INSTRUCTIONS ON BACK BEFORE FILLING IN FORM

572-16-9075
DO NOT WRITE IN THE ABOVE SPACE

EACH ITEM SHOULD BE FILLED IN. IF THE INFORMATION CALLED FOR IN ANY ITEM IS NOT KNOWN, WRITE "UNKNOWN"
PLEASE PRINT WITH INK OR USE TYPEWRITER

1. GERALD — WORKER'S FIRST NAME; ROY — MIDDLE NAME (IF YOU HAVE NO MIDDLE NAME, DRAW A LINE ———) (MARRIED WOMAN—FOR MIDDLE NAME, GIVE LAST NAME BEFORE MARRIAGE; FOR LAST NAME GIVE HUSBAND'S LAST NAME); GREEN — LAST NAME
2. FULL NAME UNDER WHICH YOU WORK, IF DIFFERENT FROM NAME SHOWN IN ITEM 1
3. Market 417 Emporia KANS. — WORKER'S PRESENT HOME ADDRESS (STREET AND NUMBER) (CITY) (STATE)
4. HAVE YOU EVER BEFORE HAD A SOCIAL SECURITY ACCOUNT NUMBER CARD? NO ✓ YES ___ (CHECK (✓) WHICH AND IF ANSWER IS "YES" ENTER PLACE AND DATE OF ORIGINAL FILING AND REASONS FOR FILING AGAIN)
5. 17 — AGE AT LAST BIRTHDAY
6. June 1 1923 — DATE OF BIRTH (MONTH) (DAY) (YEAR) (SUBJECT TO LATER VERIFICATION)
7. Neosho Falls Coffey Kans — PLACE OF BIRTH (CITY) (COUNTY) (STATE)
8. SEX: MALE ✓ FEMALE ___ (CHECK (✓) WHICH)
9. COLOR OR RACE: WHITE ✓ NEGRO ___ OTHER ___ (SPECIFY) (CHECK (✓) WHICH)
10. MARRIED ___ SINGLE ✓ WIDOWED ___ DIVORCED ___ SEPARATED ___ (CHECK (✓) WHICH)
11. Crown Drug Co. — BUSINESS NAME OF PRESENT EMPLOYER
12. Commercial 625 Emporia Kans — BUSINESS ADDRESS OF PRESENT EMPLOYER (STREET AND NUMBER) (CITY) (STATE)
13. Roy Vinton Green — FATHER'S FULL NAME, REGARDLESS OF WHETHER LIVING OR DEAD
14. ~~[illegible]~~ Olive ~~Green~~ Me[illegible] Gladys — MOTHER'S FULL NAME BEFORE MARRIAGE, REGARDLESS OF WHETHER LIVING OR DEAD
15. none — DATE LAST FULL TIME JOB ENDED—LAST OCCUPATION—LAST INDUSTRY (SEE INSTRUCTIONS)
16. HOW WERE YOU PAID? ___ SPECIFY EXAMPLES: "DAILY WAGE," "SALARY," "COMMISSION," "PIECEWORK")
17. Jan. 24, 1941 — DATE SIGNED
18. Gerald Roy Green — APPLICANT'S WRITTEN SIGNATURE (FIRST NAME) (MIDDLE INITIAL) (LAST NAME)

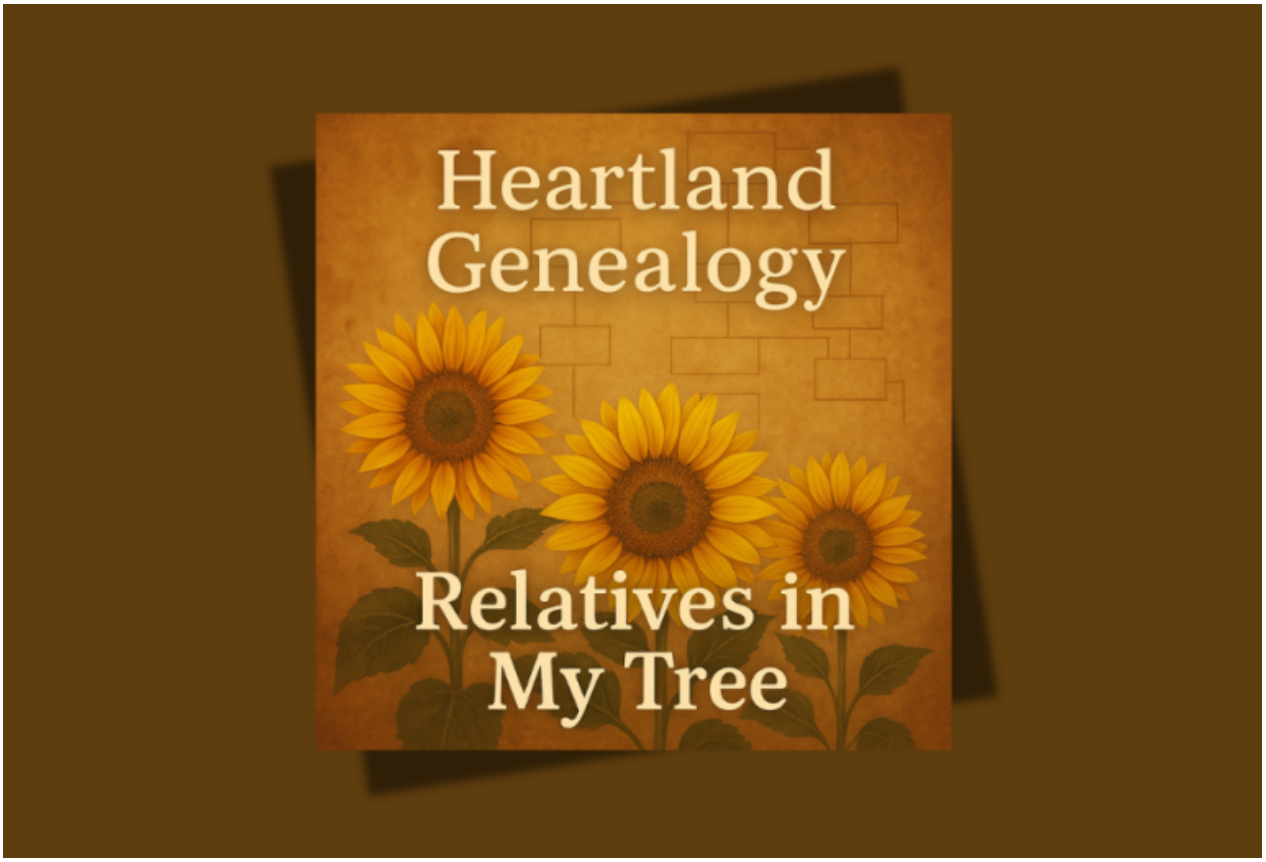
RETURN COMPLETED APPLICATION TO, OR SECURE INFORMATION ON HOW TO FILL IN APPLICATION FROM, NEAREST SOCIAL SECURITY BOARD FIELD OFFICE. THE ADDRESS CAN BE OBTAINED FROM LOCAL POST OFFICE

According to the Social Security Administration website, it’s still possible to submit a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request for a deceased person’s SS-5 application. As of 2025, the fee for such a request is $27.

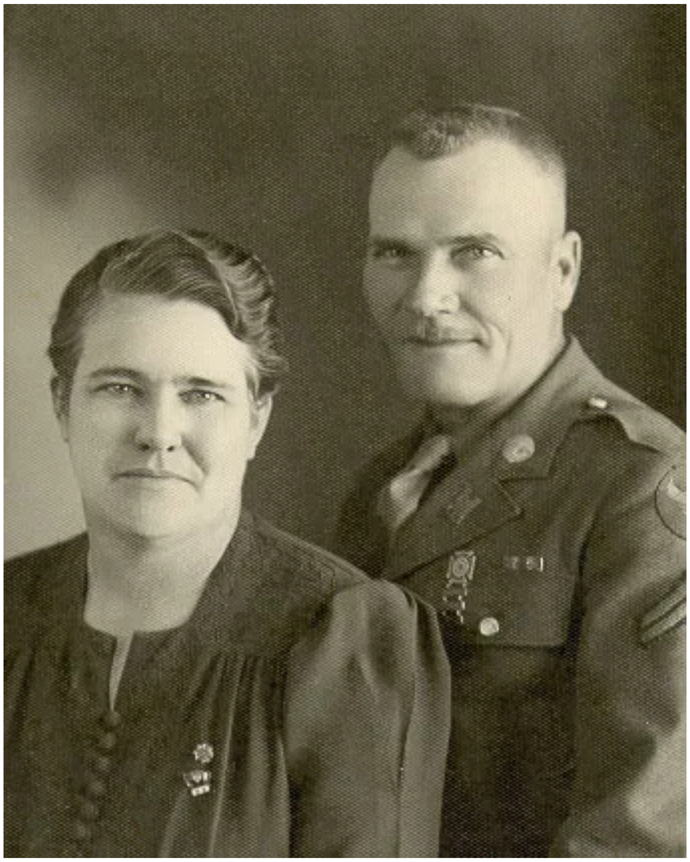
Given that most of the key information is now available through the online database—and considering the cost—it’s unlikely that I will be submitting any additional FOIA requests in the future. However, finding this early SS-5 form in my files reminds me how valuable even a small piece of original documentation can be to genealogical research.

Relatives in My Tree

By Marcia Crawford Philbrick
May 3, 2025
Crawford
https://heartlandgenealogy.org/2025/05/03/relatives-in-my-tree-3/



Helen Marjorie Crawford Horton: A Life Rooted in Dodge City and Beyond
My great-aunt Helen Crawford was born and raised in Dodge City, Kansas. She married World War I veteran Russel Horton and together they raised a family through decades of change, wartime service, and cross-country moves. This post traces Helen's life journey—from her childhood home on 4th Avenue to her final years in Texas—along with the lives of her husband and children.



Helen Marjorie Crawford Family Narrative

Helen Marjorie Crawford was born on April 30, 1900, in Dodge City, Kansas, the daughter of Judson Foster Crawford and Josie Winifred Hammond. [1–8]

She grew up in Dodge City, living on 4th Avenue in 1900, in the city proper in 1905 and 1915, and in the 2nd Ward in 1910. [9–12] She attended Dodge City High School, where she was a student in 1916. [13]

Helen married **Russel C. Horton** on July 16, 1919, in Dodge City. [1,6,14–16] The couple continued to reside in Dodge City, where they raised their three children. [17–18]

Russel C. Horton

Russel was born on June 19, 1897. [6,39] He enlisted in the military on April 26, 1917, and was discharged on May 28, 1919, at Camp Funston, Kansas. [40–41] Shortly after his discharge, he married Helen Crawford. [1,6,14–16]

He worked as a meat clerk and lived at 107 Poplar in Dodge City in 1925. [22] Later, the family resided at 615 10th Street, as of the 1940 census. [25]

Russel re-enlisted during World War II, registering for the draft on February 16, 1942, and serving as a Master Sergeant in the 3600th Support Squadron of the U.S. Air Force between 1942 and 1945. He was stationed at the air service base in Coffeyville, Kansas. [39,44–45] He was honorably discharged on October 12, 1945.

By 1946, Russel had moved to San Angelo, Texas. He later resided in Gila Bend, Arizona, where he passed away on January 28, 1958, at age 60. [6,44,46–50] His funeral was held on January 31, and he was buried first at Pioneer Cemetery in Gila Bend, with later burial also noted at Fort Bliss National Cemetery in El Paso, Texas. [46,50–53]

Children of Helen and Russel Horton

1. Russel Clifton Horton Jr.

Born October 13, 1920, in Dodge City, Russel Jr. registered for the military draft on February 16, 1942, and enlisted on August 27, 1942. [19–20,55,60] He served in the U.S. Army as a Master Sergeant and was discharged on October 3, 1945. [55]

He remained active in the Dodge City community and was a member of the VFW color guard group “The Blue Bullets.” [56] He lived in Dodge City throughout the 1950s–1970s, including at 1817 Parkway T and 2518 Webster Avenue. [59,63]

Russel Jr. died on April 12, 2006, in Olathe, Kansas, at the age of 85. He was buried at Maple Grove Cemetery in Dodge City. [54,56,64–70]

He married **Eileen Avenellele Jones** on April 13, 1941, in Ensign, Kansas. [6,56,71–72] Eileen was born on November 5, 1917 (or 1918), in Kansas and died on May 28, 2002, at age 83 in Dodge City. She was also buried at Maple Grove Cemetery. [72–74,76–79]

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2. Marjorie Louise Horton

Marjorie was born January 11, 1923, in Dodge City. [6,21,80–81] She attended Dodge City High School and lived in the city through the 1940s. [82–83]

She married **James Kenneth Brock** in 1940 in Dodge City. [88] James was born May 6, 1914, in Oklahoma and served in the military aboard the AP-138 transport ship during World War II. [88–92] He died on May 8, 1970, in Quinter, Kansas, and was buried at the Kansas Veterans Cemetery in Fort Dodge. [88–90,96]

Marjorie also had a marriage connection to a man surnamed **Machado**. [84]

She died in September 1953 at the age of 30 in Phoenix, Arizona, and was buried on September 21 at Maple Grove Cemetery in Dodge City. [80–81,84–87]

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3. Elaine Marilyn Horton

Elaine was born July 1, 1926, in Dodge City and graduated from high school there in 1944. [6,23,97–101] She later lived in El Paso, Texas, residing at 6129 Quail Avenue. [99,102]

Elaine died on March 6 or 7, 2008, at age 81 and was buried on March 11 at Restlawn Memorial Park in El Paso. [97,100,103–105]

She married **George Alton Wells** on April 20, 1946, at Sheppard Field in Wichita Falls, Texas. [6,101] George was born August 18, 1923, in Chalk, Texas, and later lived in Evanston, Wyoming, and El Paso. He passed away on March 11, 2010, at age 86. [6,109–112]

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Saturday Night Genealogy Fun

By Marcia Crawford Philbrick
May 4, 2025
SaturdayNightGenealogyFun
https://heartlandgenealogy.org/2025/05/04/saturday-night-genealogy-fun-154/

Calling all Genea-Musings Fans:

It's Saturday Night again –

Time for some more Genealogy Fun!!

Come on, everybody, join in and accept the mission and execute it with precision.

1) How many autosomal DNA matches do you have descended from your eight 2nd-great-grandparents (they would be your third cousins)? Do you know how they are related to you? Have you corresponded with them? Why are your numbers high or low?

I used the ThruLines pages to begin answering these questions for the four DNA tests that I manage.

DNA Matches Descending from my 2nd great grandparents

Ancestor	Me	Brother 1	Brother 2	Mother
Washington Crawford	18	18	18	
Mary Foster	13	13		
Richmond Hammond	16	16	16	
Sarah Ralston	14	14	14	
HIram Currey	9	10	10	
Angelina Burke	9	10	10	
Albert Hutchinson	37	33	35	
Julia Harding	37	33	35	
Noah Briles	11	11	11	11
Sarah Thompson	11	11	11	11
James Ricketts	11	11	11	11
Rachel Christy	11	11	11	11
George Mentzer	21	21	20	21
Emiline Minnick	21	21	20	21
Thurston Wells	22	21	21	23
Salome Crandall	19	20	18	20

How many of these cousins have I idenfied? If I have identified our connection, then I also have them in my tree. Below are the stats for ***my*** DNA test.

Washington Marion Crawford / Mary Foster

- 4 third cousins – my test / all identified in my tree
- 14 second cousins or closer – identified

Richmond Fisk Hammond

- 2 third cousins – my test / both identified
- 14 second cousins or closer – identified

Sarah Ellen Ralston

- 14 second cousins or closer – identified

Hiram M. Currey / Angelina Jane Burke

- 6 third cousins – all identified
- 3 second cousins or closer – identified

Albert Hutchinson / Julia Harding

- 34 third cousins – all identified
- 3 second cousins or closer – all identified

Noah Briles / Sarah Thompson

- 1 third cousin
- 10 second cousins or closer

James Marshall Ricketts / Rachel Christy

- 1 third cousin – all identified
- 10 second cousin or closer – all identified

George Mentzer / Emiline Minnick

- 12 third cousins – all identified
- 10 second cousins or closer – all identified

Thurston Kennedy Wells / Salome Crandall

- 12 third cousins – all identified
- 10 second cousins or closer – all identified

Have I contacted them? I don’t keep track of this, but I know that I’ve contacted many of them.

Why are my numbers high or low?

First, I am fortunate to have lots of close cousins who have tested. My numbers are impacted by family size. When there are more siblings of my great grandparents, I have more matches.

Thank you Randy for challenging us to look at our DNA matches.

ABC Part 1:ChatGPT vs Claude

By Marcia Crawford Philbrick
May 5, 2025
Artificial Intelligence
https://heartlandgenealogy.org/2025/05/05/biography/

HEARTLAND
GENEALOGY
AI
AI
HEARTLANDGENEALOGY

Have you heard about Randy Seaver's **Ancestor Biography Creation (ABC)** process? Although I regularly follow Randy's blog, I somehow missed the original post introducing this method. Fortunately, he discussed it in more detail during the **April 26th session of Mondays with Myrt**.

Randy incorporates several AI tools as part of his ABC workflow. During the session, he mentioned that he prefers the biographies generated by **Claude** over those written by **ChatGPT**. I have to admit—I'm a big fan of ChatGPT. It has been an incredibly helpful tool in both my genealogical research and blogging efforts. But Randy's comment made me curious.

So, I decided to run an experiment. Using the prompt Randy recommended, I submitted the same task to both platforms—Claude and ChatGPT—to see how their responses compared.

ChatGPT's Reponse

> ### Biography of Leon Russel Crawford
>
> **(1894–1976)**
>
> **Early Life and Family Background**
>
> Leon Russel Crawford was born on **February 6, 1894**, in Newton, Kansas, to **Judson Foster Crawford** and

Josie Winifred Hammond. He was their firstborn son and spent most of his childhood in Dodge City, Kansas. By 1895, he was already listed on the Kansas census as a one-year-old in the household of his father.

Leon grew up surrounded by family in Dodge City. As a child, he attended local schools and was noted in both school records and state censuses through the early 1900s. His siblings included other members of the Crawford family who, like Leon, remained rooted in the Dodge City area.

Education and Early Career

Leon's early schooling took place in Dodge City around 1900–1901 and again in 1909. By 1915, he was working as a clerk and living at home. His long association with the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad began shortly thereafter. In December 1916, he was employed as a yard helper and switchman for the railroad—roles he would return to after serving his country.

Military Service During World War I

When the United States entered World War I in 1917, Leon was among the early volunteers. He enlisted on **April 22, 1917**, in Dodge City and was appointed Wagoner 2nd Class Gunner in the 25th Anti-Aircraft Battery, 1st Anti-Aircraft Sector.

Leon trained at Ft. Logan, Colorado, and later served at Ft. Barry in San Francisco before deploying overseas. In France, he saw active service at the **Second Battle of the Marne** and in the **outer defense of Paris**. He returned to the United States in early 1919, sending a telegram from Camp Stuart, Virginia, to reassure his family of his safe arrival. He was honorably discharged on **March 28, 1919**, at Camp Funston, Kansas.

Marriage and Family Life

On **December 24, 1919**, Leon married **Winnie Letha Currey** in Dodge City. They settled in town and began raising a family. Leon and Winnie had three children:

1. **Betty Jean Crawford**, born **May 13, 1921**, in Dodge City. Sadly, she died the same day.
2. **Eugene David Crawford**, born **December 8, 1927**, in Dodge City; he later served in the U.S. Navy and became a physician.
3. **Leon Russel Crawford II**, born **November 10, 1938**, also in Dodge City. He passed away **February 10, 1961**, in Wisconsin and was buried in Dodge City.

Career and Community Involvement

Leon resumed his railroad career after the war, working for the AT&SF Railroad for more than four decades. By 1953, he had risen to the position of engine foreman. Leon and Winnie lived for many years at **911 Second Avenue** in Dodge City, a home they owned and improved over time.

He was an active member of the **First United Methodist Church**, participating in the Baraca Class for nearly 50 years. He was also a member of the **Veterans of Foreign Wars** and the **St. Bernard Masonic Lodge No. 222** in Dodge City. In 1967, he received his **50-year veteran's emblem** from the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen.

Retirement and Later Years

Leon retired from the railroad on **May 13, 1960**, and continued to live in Dodge City with his wife Winnie. The couple celebrated their **50th wedding anniversary** with a reception at their church in December 1969.

Leon was proactive about his final arrangements, prepaying for funeral services and handling property transfers before his passing.

Death and Burial

Leon passed away on **October 3, 1976**, at the age of 82 in Dodge City. His funeral was held on **October 6**, and he was buried that same day at **Maple Grove Cemetery**, in Lot 7, Block 95, Section 3. A tombstone was placed a few days later to mark his final resting place.

Claude’s Response

Leon Russell Crawford – A Life Biography

Early Life & Family Background

Leon Russell Crawford was born on February 6, 1894, in Newton, Kansas, to parents Judson Foster Crawford and Josie Winifred Hammond. His birth was announced in the Newton Daily Republican newspaper on February 9, 1894.

As a young child, Leon moved with his family to Dodge City, Kansas, where he would spend most of his life. The 1895 Kansas census shows him as a 1-year-old living in the household of J.F. Crawford in Dodge City.

Education

Leon received his education in Dodge City schools. Records show he attended school there between 1900 and 1901. His education continued through at least 1909, when he was in the seventh grade at Dodge City Public Schools.

Early Career

By 1916, at the age of 22, Leon was working as a clerk in Dodge City. In December of that same year, he began working for the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad as a yard helper, switchman, and engineer for the Western Division in Dodge City. This would be the beginning of a long career with the railroad that would span over four decades.

Military Service

When the United States entered World War I, Leon answered the call to serve. He reported to the recruiting station to enlist on April 22, 1917, in Dodge City and left for Fort Logan, Colorado that same day. His formal military service began on April 26, 1917.

Leon was appointed wagoner 2nd class gunner with the 25th A.A. Battery, 1st A.A. Sector. In June 1917, he was honored by the Methodist Sunday School for serving in the military. By November 1917, he was stationed at Fort Berry in San Francisco, California.

In January 1918, his mailing address was listed as the 14th Company, Anti-Aircraft Battalion of San Francisco, American Expeditionary Forces, via New York, indicating his deployment overseas was imminent.

Leon served as a wagoner in France, participating in the Second Battle of the Marne from March 31 to May 31, 1918. He later served in the outer defense of Paris from June 28 to November 8, 1918.

After the war ended, Leon set sail from Brest, France on the U.S.S. Ohio on February 20, 1919. On March 15, 1919, he sent a telegram to his parents from Camp Stuart, Virginia stating, “Arrived here all OK am well and have written.” Leon received an honorable discharge from the United States Army on March 28, 1919, at Camp Funston, Kansas, and returned home to Dodge City on April 10, 1919.

Marriage & Family

On December 24, 1919, Leon married Winnie Letha Currey in Dodge City. The couple initially lived at 504 Avenue G in Dodge City.

Leon and Winnie had three children:

- Betty Jean Crawford, born May 13, 1921, in Dodge City (died the same day)
- Eugene David Crawford, born December 8, 1927, in Dodge City (died September 14, 2006)
- Leon Russell Crawford II, born November 10, 1938, at Charlotte Murray Memorial Hospital in Dodge City (died February 10, 1961)

Railroad Career

After returning from military service, Leon resumed his career with the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway System. From 1917 to 1960, he worked as an engine foreman and switchman for the company. City directories from various years consistently list his occupation with the railroad.

By 1953, Leon had achieved the position of foreman for the railroad. Throughout the years, the family lived at several addresses in Dodge City, eventually settling at 911 2nd Avenue, where they lived from 1953 until 1976.

After a long and dedicated career, Leon retired from the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad on May 13, 1960. He was honored with a lifetime pass on all Santa Fe system lines and received a Certificate of Honor from the company.

Community Involvement

Leon was active in his community throughout his life. He was a longtime member of the First United Methodist Church in Dodge City. From 1927 to 1976, he was involved with the Baraca Class at the church.

He was also a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars post in Dodge City and belonged to St. Bernard Lodge No. 222 A.F. & A.M. (Masonic Lodge). In 1967, Leon received his 50-year Veteran’s Emblem as a member of the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen, recognizing his long association with the railroad union.

Later Years

On December 28, 1969, Leon and Winnie celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary with a reception at the First United Methodist Church parlor in Dodge City, marking 50 years of marriage.

In 1976, the couple sold their home at 911 Second Avenue for $21,500. On October 3, 1976, Leon Russell Crawford passed away in Dodge City at the age of 82. His funeral was held on October 6, 1976, and he was buried in Maple Grove Cemetery in Dodge City, at Lot 7, Block 95, Section 3.

Historical Context

Leon’s life spanned a remarkable period of American history. Born in the late Victorian era, he witnessed the dawn of the automobile age, two World Wars, the Great Depression, and the space race. His railroad career coincided with the golden age of American railroads, when companies like the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe were vital to the nation’s transportation infrastructure.

His military service during World War I placed him in Europe during one of history’s pivotal moments. As a wagoner in the Anti-Aircraft Battery, he would have been responsible for transporting equipment and supplies, playing an essential support role in the American war effort.

Throughout his life, Leon demonstrated commitment to family, career, and community, embodying the values

> of his generation. From his early days in Newton to his long life in Dodge City, Leon Russell Crawford's story is woven into the fabric of Kansas and American history.

I found this experiment to verify what Randy stated. I like the details that Claude included about my grandfather's military life. I also appreciate the 'Historical Context' section in the Claude biography.

Curious about whether ChatGPT could provide the Historical Context section, I simply asked it

> Can you add a 'historical context' section about my grandfather's life?

And ChatGPT came thru!

> **Historical Context**
>
> Leon Russel Crawford's life spanned a remarkable period in American history, marked by transformative change. Born in 1894—just before the dawn of the 20th century—Leon came of age during a time when Kansas was still very much tied to its frontier roots. Dodge City, where he spent nearly his entire life, had evolved from a lawless cattle town into a growing regional hub.
>
> As a young adult, Leon witnessed the nation's entry into **World War I**, becoming one of the many who answered the call to serve. His military service in **France during 1918**, particularly during the Second Battle of the Marne, placed him amid a turning point in global history as the U.S. asserted itself on the world stage.
>
> The post-war years brought dramatic economic changes. Leon returned to a country heading into the **Roaring Twenties**, followed by the hardship of the **Great Depression**. Throughout it all, he maintained stable employment with the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad—an industry vital to the movement of people and goods across the expanding American West.
>
> He was a working man during **World War II**, a father to a son who would later serve in the Navy, and a citizen during the rise of the **civil rights movement**, the **space race**, and the post-war economic boom. Leon's long tenure with the railroad paralleled the golden age of American rail travel, and his 1960 retirement came just as the nation was turning toward air travel and interstate highways.
>
> Throughout his life, Leon remained deeply tied to his community—through his church, veteran organizations, and civic engagement. He was part of a generation often referred to as the **"Greatest Generation"**—not because of fame or fortune, but because of a steadfast commitment to duty, family, and country through some of America's most defining decades.

Since ChatGPT came thru with the 'historical context' section, I asked it to expand the military service section.

> **Military Service During World War I**
>
> When the United States entered World War I in April 1917, Leon Russel Crawford was among the patriotic young men who answered the call. On **April 22, 1917**, at just 23 years old, Leon reported to the recruiting station in Dodge City and enlisted in the U.S. Army. That same day, he departed for **Fort Logan, Colorado**, a key training facility for new Army recruits.
>
> Leon was assigned to the **25th Anti-Aircraft Battery**, part of the **1st Anti-Aircraft Sector**—a relatively new arm of the military designed to counter the growing threat of enemy aircraft on the European battlefronts. His specific designation was **Wagoner 2nd Class Gunner**, a role that combined logistics and artillery transport responsibilities. As a wagoner, Leon was responsible for handling teams of horses or mules that pulled supply wagons, ammunition, and even mobile artillery through often difficult and dangerous terrain.
>
> By **June 1917**, he was recognized by his hometown community, receiving a tribute from the **Methodist Sunday School** in Dodge City for his military service. He soon shipped out to **Fort Barry**, near San Francisco, California, and from there to **France**, where he became part of the **American Expeditionary**

> **Forces (AEF)**.
>
> Leon saw action during some of the most pivotal moments of the war. From **March 31 to May 31, 1918**, he served as a wagoner at **St. Mihiel**, supporting operations during what would later be known as the **Second Battle of the Marne**—a crucial Allied counteroffensive that turned the tide of the war against the Germans. After that, from **June 28 to November 8, 1918**, he served in the **outer defense of Paris**, helping protect the French capital from further German advances.
>
> His job was dangerous and demanding. Wagoners often worked long hours transporting munitions, food, and medical supplies to the front lines. Roads were muddy or destroyed, and enemy fire was a constant threat. Yet Leon did his duty faithfully, contributing to the massive logistical effort that helped secure Allied victory.
>
> After the **Armistice** on November 11, 1918, Leon remained in Europe for several more months. He eventually sailed home from **Brest, France**, aboard the **U.S.S. Ohio**, arriving in early 1919. On **March 15**, he sent a telegram from **Camp Stuart, Virginia**, to his parents, letting them know he had arrived safely: "Arrived here all OK. Am well and have written."
>
> He was **honorably discharged on March 28, 1919**, at **Camp Funston, Kansas**, and returned home to Dodge City on **April 10, 1919**. Like many veterans of the Great War, Leon carried with him a quiet pride in his service and a lifelong commitment to duty and community.
>
> In later years, Leon was recognized as an ex-serviceman of World War I and remained active in veteran circles, including as a member of the **Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW)**. His military service was not only a defining chapter in his own life but a proud legacy for future generations of the Crawford family.

With these two improvements, I asked ChatGPT

> Yes, can you incorporate the expanded narrative for the military service into the biography and then add the historical context narrative to the bottom of the biography?

After also asking ChatGPT to expand the section on my grandfather's work with the railroad, I have a comprehensive biography incorporting historical comments from ChatGPT.

> ## Biography of Leon Russel Crawford
>
> #### (1894–1976)
>
> #### Early Life and Family Background
>
> Leon Russel Crawford was born on **February 6, 1894**, in Newton, Kansas, to **Judson Foster Crawford** and **Josie Winifred Hammond**. He was their firstborn son and spent nearly all of his life in Dodge City, Kansas. By 1895, he was already listed on the Kansas state census as a one-year-old in his father's household.
>
> Leon was raised in Dodge City, where he attended school and was listed in various local and state census records throughout his childhood. He had several siblings, all part of the larger Crawford family rooted deeply in Ford County. Education was a part of his early years, with school records confirming attendance in Dodge City around 1900 and again in 1909.
>
> #### Early Employment
>
> By 1915, Leon was working as a clerk while still living in Dodge City. In 1916, he began his lifelong career with the **Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad**, working as a yard helper and switchman. This job would become the cornerstone of his professional life, carrying him through the next four decades.
>
> #### Military Service During World War I

When the United States entered World War I in April 1917, Leon was among the patriotic young men who answered the call. On **April 22, 1917**, at age 23, he enlisted in Dodge City and departed the same day for **Fort Logan, Colorado**, to begin military training.

Leon was assigned to the **25th Anti-Aircraft Battery** in the **1st Anti-Aircraft Sector**, a relatively new branch of the military created to counter the increasing use of aircraft in warfare. His position was **Wagoner 2nd Class Gunner**, which involved driving and maintaining horse-drawn wagons used to transport supplies, ammunition, and mobile artillery—a vital but often dangerous role on the front lines.

In June 1917, the Methodist Sunday School in Dodge City publicly honored Leon for his service. He trained at **Fort Barry** near San Francisco before heading to **France** as part of the **American Expeditionary Forces (AEF)**.

Leon saw active duty at several key points in the war. From **March 31 to May 31, 1918**, he served as a wagoner at **St. Mihiel**, participating in the **Second Battle of the Marne**, a critical Allied victory. From **June 28 to November 8, 1918**, he was stationed in the **outer defense of Paris**, helping protect the city during one of the final German offensives.

Wagoners like Leon played an essential logistical role, often working under fire to ensure that men at the front received the supplies they needed. The roads were treacherous and the work exhausting, but his efforts contributed directly to the Allied success in the war.

After the Armistice in November 1918, Leon remained in France until early 1919. He returned to the U.S. aboard the **U.S.S. Ohio**, sending a telegram to his parents from **Camp Stuart, Virginia**, on **March 15, 1919**, to let them know he had arrived safely: “Arrived here all OK. Am well and have written.” He was **honorably discharged** on **March 28, 1919**, at **Camp Funston**, and returned home to Dodge City on **April 10**.

Leon would later be enrolled as an official World War I veteran in Kansas and was active in veterans’ organizations including the **VFW**.

Marriage and Children

Leon married **Winnie Letha Currey** on **December 24, 1919**, in Dodge City. They made their home in the city and raised three children:

- **Betty Jean Crawford**, born **May 13, 1921**, in Dodge City. Sadly, she passed away the same day.
- **Eugene David Crawford**, born **December 8, 1927**, in Dodge City. He became a physician and served in the U.S. Navy during World War II.
- **Leon Russel Crawford II**, born **November 10, 1938**, in Dodge City, died **February 10, 1961**, in Wisconsin.

Railroad Career and Community Life

Leon Russel Crawford devoted more than four decades of his life to the **Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway (AT&SF)**—one of the most prominent and historic railroads in the American West. He began working for the railroad in **1916** as a yard helper and switchman, just before the United States entered World War I. After serving in the military, Leon returned to Dodge City and resumed his railroad career, a profession he would pursue faithfully until his retirement in **1960**.

Throughout his long tenure, Leon held various roles with the railroad, eventually working his way up to **engine foreman**. As a **switchman**, his responsibilities included the safe operation of rail switches, coupling and uncoupling cars, and coordinating the movement of trains within rail yards—tasks requiring precision, physical stamina, and careful coordination. Later, as **engine foreman**, Leon would have supervised crews in the yard, managed schedules, and ensured the efficiency and safety of operations.

The AT&SF Railway was a vital part of Kansas’ infrastructure, connecting cities and towns, transporting agricultural goods, and supporting local economies. For Dodge City, which had a long legacy as a railroad and cattle hub, the railroad was more than just a job—it was a lifeline. Leon's work contributed to keeping goods, people, and opportunities moving across the plains.

His employment spanned some of the most dynamic decades in American railroading: the post–World War I boom, the hardships of the **Great Depression**, the heavy logistical demands of **World War II**, and the peacetime prosperity of the 1950s. Even as railroads across the country began to decline in favor of trucking and air travel, Leon remained a steady figure in a changing industry.

Leon's dedication did not go unnoticed. He received a **lifetime pass** for the Santa Fe system lines and was honored with a **50-year Veteran's Emblem** by the **Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen**, recognizing his long-standing commitment and service.

Outside of work, Leon was deeply involved in the **First United Methodist Church**, where he was a decades-long member of the **Baraca Class**, a fellowship group within the church. He also maintained memberships in the **Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW)** and the **St. Bernard Lodge No. 222 of the Masons**, reflecting both his military and civic-minded values.

Leon and his wife Winnie owned their home at **911 Second Avenue** in Dodge City, which they purchased and improved over time. He took pride in homeownership and ensured the property was passed on securely to his wife through careful estate planning.

Through his steady railroad career and active community presence, Leon Crawford built a life rooted in responsibility, service, and connection—a legacy that endures through the stories of his work and the family he helped shape.

Retirement and Later Years

Leon officially retired on **May 13, 1960**, after more than 40 years with the railroad. He and Winnie celebrated their **50th wedding anniversary** in **December 1969** with a reception at their church. In his later years, Leon took care of property transactions, prepaid for funeral arrangements, and remained active in community life. He also sold the family home on **Second Avenue** in 1976.

Death and Burial

Leon passed away on **October 3, 1976**, at the age of 82. He was buried on **October 6** in **Maple Grove Cemetery** in Dodge City, where many family members also rest. His grave is located in **Lot 7, Block 95, Section 3**, marked by a headstone arranged shortly after his burial.

Historical Context

Leon Russel Crawford's life spanned a remarkable period in American history, marked by transformative change. Born in 1894—just before the dawn of the 20th century—Leon came of age during a time when Kansas was still very much tied to its frontier roots. Dodge City, where he spent nearly his entire life, had evolved from a lawless cattle town into a growing regional hub.

As a young adult, Leon witnessed the nation's entry into **World War I**, becoming one of the many who answered the call to serve. His military service in **France during 1918**, particularly during the Second Battle of the Marne, placed him amid a turning point in global history as the U.S. asserted itself on the world stage.

The post-war years brought dramatic economic changes. Leon returned to a country heading into the **Roaring Twenties**, followed by the hardship of the **Great Depression**. Throughout it all, he maintained stable employment with the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad—an industry vital to the movement of people and goods across the expanding American West.

He was a working man during **World War II**, a father to a son who would later serve in the Navy, and a

> citizen during the rise of the **civil rights movement**, the **space race**, and the post-war economic boom. Leon's long tenure with the railroad paralleled the golden age of American rail travel, and his 1960 retirement came just as the nation was turning toward air travel and interstate highways.
>
> Throughout his life, Leon remained deeply tied to his community—through his church, veteran organizations, and civic engagement. He was part of a generation often referred to as the **"Greatest Generation"**—not because of fame or fortune, but because of a steadfast commitment to duty, family, and country through some of America's most defining decades.

While Claude produced an expanded biography right from the initial prompt, ChatGPT was able to deliver a similarly detailed result with a bit of additional guidance. What stands out to me is how ChatGPT seems to learn and adapt to my writing style and preferences. Because of this, I plan to continue using ChatGPT for creating ancestor biographies—trusting that, over time, it will require less prompting and become even more aligned with how I want these stories told.

In the end, both tools have their strengths, but finding the one that best complements your research style—and helps bring your ancestors' stories to life—is what matters most.

ABC Part 2: Poem or Song Lyrics

By Marcia Crawford Philbrick
May 6, 2025
Artificial Intelligence
https://heartlandgenealogy.org/2025/05/06/abc-part-2-poem-or-song-lyrics/

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Introduction

I've been exploring Randy Seaver's *Ancestor Biography Creation (ABC)* process as a structured way to tell my ancestors' stories. After completing the first step—writing a biography of my grandfather, Leon Crawford—I moved on to **Step 2: turning that narrative into a poem or song**. To see how different AI tools might approach this task, I asked both **ChatGPT** and **Claude** to help.

Process

Since I had already used both platforms to generate Leon Crawford's biography, I gave each the same follow-up prompt:

> **"Using the biography you recently created for Leon Crawford, write a poem or song lyrics about his life."**

The responses reflected each tool's unique strengths.

- **ChatGPT** crafted **song lyrics**, written in a ballad style that highlighted Leon's journey from Kansas rail yards to the battlefields of France and back. The lyrics followed a clear verse-chorus structure and captured both the factual and emotional aspects of his life.

  "Tracks Through Time: The Ballad of Leon Crawford"

Verse 1
In eighteen ninety-four he came,
Born in Newton, given a name.
To Dodge City, young and small,
Where prairie winds would hear his call.

Verse 2
Raised where trains rolled day and night,
He learned to work, to serve, to fight.
With steady hands and a quiet grace,
He carved his life in that wild place.

Chorus
🎶 He rode the rails and marched through war,
A Kansas son through every chore.
With heart and grit, he built his days—
On steam and sweat and humble praise.
A soldier's will, a worker's pride,
With Winnie always by his side.
Leon Crawford's name won't fade,
He left his mark where roots are laid. 🎶

Verse 3
April came and off he went,
To serve his land with firm intent.
Wagoner in France's rain,
Through mud and fear and bitter pain.

Verse 4
Returned with boots and memories worn,
To Santa Fe where dreams were born.
Forty years with rail and steel,
He led with hands that knew the wheel.

Bridge
He raised a boy who wore the blue,
And laid to rest the children, too.
Yet through the grief, he found the light,
In work, in church, in doing right.

Chorus
🎶 He rode the rails and marched through war,
A Kansas son through every chore.
With heart and grit, he built his days—
On steam and sweat and humble praise.
A soldier's will, a worker's pride,
With Winnie always by his side.
Leon Crawford's name won't fade,
He left his mark where roots are laid. 🎶

Outro
So raise a flag and tip your hat,
To the life of a man who stood where he sat.
From Newton's cry to Dodge's rest,
Leon Crawford lived his best.

- **Claude**, on the other hand, delivered a **poem** with a more literary tone—focusing on the rhythms of memory and reflection. It was thoughtful and evocative, drawing on the biography's themes of service, work, and quiet legacy.

The Switchman's Journey

A Poem About Leon Russell Crawford, 1894-1976

Born in Kansas winter, eighteen ninety-four, Newton's winds welcomed you to this shore. Judson and Josie's son, wide-eyed and new, Dodge City waiting, with adventures true.

Schoolboy in heartland, learning day by day, The rhythm of the plains, where you would stay. The railroad calling, steel tracks gleaming bright, A switchman's career, your chosen life's light.

When war clouds gathered across the distant sea, You answered duty's call, so brave and free. A wagoner in France through battles grim, Defending Paris when hopes grew dim.

Home from war to Kansas winds you knew, Found Winnie waiting, love steadfast and true. Christmas Eve vows beneath winter skies, A partnership formed through lows and highs.

Three children blessed the home you made with care, Though sorrow's shadow sometimes lingered there. Betty Jean, just a day upon this earth, Eugene and young Leon, of tremendous worth.

Four decades on the Santa Fe line, Directing steel giants with timing fine. From helper to foreman, reliable hand, A railroad man in an ever-changing land.

Church on Sundays, community strong, Baraca Class member, where you belonged. Lodge brother, veteran, neighbor kind, A steady presence with generous mind.

Golden anniversary, fifty years as one, Looking back on battles lost and won. Children grown, a life well-lived and true, Dodge City's history intertwined with you.

Autumn came at last in seventy-six, Your final journey on a route well-fixed. Maple Grove holds you in peaceful rest, A Kansas life lived, among the best.

We remember now your steady ways, The switchman who guided through countless days. From Newton's cradle to Dodge City's hold, Leon Russell Crawford—a life story told.

What I loved most about this step was how each tool added its own creative lens. Where ChatGPT leaned into narrative rhythm and melody, Claude opted for poetic resonance. Thanks to this trial, I now have both **song lyrics** *and* a **poem** to honor my grandfather—a meaningful result I didn't expect from a simple experiment.

Conclusion

This side-by-side comparison has been both fun and insightful. Each platform brought its own voice to the task—ChatGPT through lyrical storytelling, and Claude through poetic reflection. Together, they helped me preserve my grandfather's legacy in a creative and heartfelt way.

This experiment also confirmed something I've suspected for a while: both tools are capable of handling this step of the ABC process—but how you use them (and what kind of tone or format you prefer) can make all the difference. I'm looking forward to continuing this journey and seeing what **Step 3** brings!

ABC Part 3: Song

By Marcia Crawford Philbrick
May 7, 2025
[Artificial Intelligence]
https://heartlandgenealogy.org/2025/05/07/abc-part-3-song/

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While I've followed Randy Seaver's use of AI to create songs about his ancestors, I haven't used AI to create any songs for my ancestors. That was until I learned about Randy's Ancestra Biographical Creation (ABC) Process.

Having completed the steps 1 thur 3, I'm not to the second part of step 4: Song Creation. Follwing Randy's directions, I submitted the song lyrics created by ChatGPT to Suno.com and asked it to create a song. Suno created two versins of the song.

Version 1

00:00 03:24

Version 2

00:00 04:30

Which version do you like?

ABC Part 3B: Songs to Video

By Marcia Crawford Philbrick
May 8, 2025
Artificial Intelligence,Crawford
https://heartlandgenealogy.org/2025/05/08/abc-part-3b-songs-to-video/

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Sharing Family History Through Song:

Using AI and YouTube to Reach Cousins

Have you been following Randy Seaver of *Genea-Musings*? I consider Randy one of the pioneers in applying AI tools to genealogy. His recent introduction of the **ABC (Ancestral Biography Creation)** process has inspired many of us to take our family stories to the next level. By following the steps in Randy's ABC process, you can go beyond writing a biography—you can even generate a **song** about your ancestor!

While I've written several biographies already, I've just begun experimenting with turning those stories into music using Suno.com. So far, I've created songs for two relatives. As my husband pointed out, the output is improving—and I agree. The key? **Feeding the AI tools rich, detailed information.** The more context you provide, the better the results.

In earlier blog posts—*ABC: Poem or Song Lyrics* and *ABC Part 3: Song*—I shared details of my songwriting experience using AI. After completing the songs, I wanted to find a simple way to share them with close cousins and family members. That's where **YouTube** comes in.

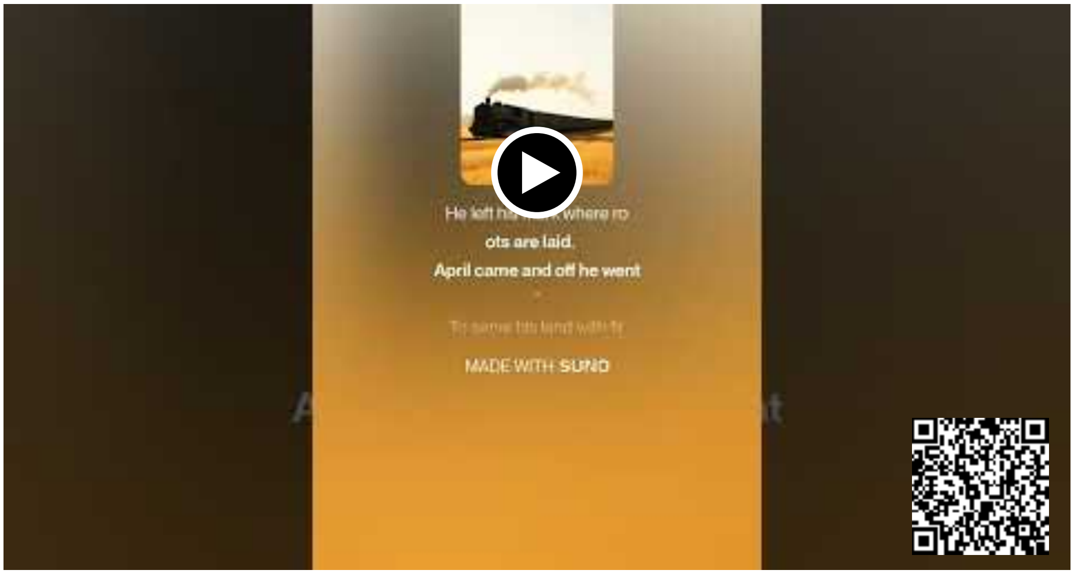
If you're interested in sharing your own AI-generated songs, here's a quick guide:

How to Upload a Suno Song to YouTube

1. **Generate the Video on Suno.com**
    - Click the **three dots (•••)** next to your song
    - Select **“Download”** and then choose **“Generate Video”**
2. **Download the Video**
    - Once the video is ready, click the **three dots (•••)** again
    - Select **“Download”** to save the video file to your computer
3. **Log into YouTube** using your Google (Gmail) account
4. Click your **profile picture** (top right) and select **“View Your Channel”**
5. Click the **CREATE** button (top right corner) and select **“Upload Video”**
6. Follow the prompts to locate your file and upload it to YouTube
7. Under **visibility**, I chose to make my video **“Unlisted”**
    - This means only people with the link can view it

Once your song is on YouTube, it’s easy to share with others—whether through a blog post, email, or social media. It’s a fun and creative way to bring your ancestors to life for your extended family.

https://youtube.com/watch?v=bU2xhD5TxPY



ABC Part 4: Podcast

By Marcia Crawford Philbrick
May 9, 2025
Artificial Intelligence,Crawford
https://heartlandgenealogy.org/2025/05/09/abc-part-4-podcast/

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Thanks to **Randy Seaver** and his *Ancestor Biography Creation (ABC)* process, I've not only discovered new tools—I've also created a **mini podcast** about my grandfather, **Leon Crawford**.

In addition to Randy's original ABC post, I found his follow-up article—**"Betty (Carringer) Seaver's Life Summary, Chat Q&A, and Audio Overview Using the Google NotebookLM AI Feature"**—especially helpful. While the interface for Google NotebookLM has changed a bit since Randy's post in October, I was still able to figure out how to use it to generate a **briefing summary**, **timeline**, and ultimately, an **audio overview** based on Leon's life.

To take it a step further, I uploaded the audio file to **Turboscribe.com** to generate a complete **transcription** of the narrative. This gave me both an audio and written version of my grandfather's story—two powerful ways to preserve and share his legacy.

Honestly, without Randy's guidance—not just in exploring these tools, but in clearly demonstrating how they can be used to enrich family history—I doubt I would have taken on this project. The results? **Amazing**.

Thanks again, Randy, for the inspiration and leadership!

00:00 14:53

Transcription:

Leon Russel Crawford Life Narrative

Apr 30, 2025, 2:11 PM

Leon Russel Crawford Life Narrative

Play

00:00

14:53

Mute

Settings

(0:00) Welcome to this deep dive. Today, we're embarking on a journey really through the life of one (0:05) Leon Russell Crawford, born February 6, 1894, in Newton, Kansas. (0:11) Right.

And our goal, you know, is to try and understand his experiences, his world, basically. (0:15) Exactly. By looking at this, well, pretty amazing collection of documents that cover his whole life.

(0:20) Yeah, it's quite an array. We've got census records, (0:24) 1895 right through to 1940. So snapshots of his household over time.

(0:28) Snapshots, yeah. (0:29) And even school reports, early ones like 1900, 1901, and then again in 1909. (0:36) Gives you a little peek into his schooling in Dodge City.

(0:39) And that's really just the start, isn't it? We've also got a 1915 Kansas census, (0:43) a city directory from 1916, placing him there as a young guy. (0:47) Starting out. (0:47) Starting out.

And then his work life, these incredibly detailed railroad employment papers. (0:52) Oh, yeah. 1916 all the way to 1960.

I mean, that's over four decades with the railway. (0:56) It's remarkable. (0:57) It really is.

And then there's World War I. (0:59) Military service records from 17 to 19. We have his honorable discharge, (1:04) even a telegram he sent home from France, which is quite touching. (1:07) Oh, wow.

(1:08) Then marriage records, 1919. City directories again, stretching from 1920 right up to 62. (1:15) Birth and death records for his kids.

The big family milestones. (1:19) Yeah. And later on, a draft card from 42, World War II era.

(1:23) Right. (1:24) Property deeds showing he owned land, part of the community. (1:26) Yeah, 47 and 60 for those.

(1:28) A 50-year veteran's emblem from the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen in 67. That's commitment. (1:34) Huge commitment.

And even his funeral plan, prepaid in 67, (1:38) gives you a sort of insight into end of life planning back then. (1:41) And finally, the death certificate from 1976. It really is, like you said, a life captured on paper.

(1:46) It absolutely is. So through all this, we're hoping to trace the main parts of his life, (1:51) his youth in Dodge City, his war service, that long railroad career. (1:55) The family, community.

(1:56) Exactly. The whole picture. And I think we'll probably uncover some, (1:59) well, some surprising details along the way.

Connections to the bigger picture. (2:03) Okay. Should we dive in then? Leon was born in Newton, Kansas, 1894, (2:06) but it sounds like Dodge City is where the story really starts.

(2:09) Yeah, pretty much immediately. The records show the family moved there very early on. (2:14) We actually find him in the 1895 Kansas census as just a one-year-old.

(2:19) Already in Dodge City. (2:20) Already in Dodge City, living with his father, J.F. Crawford. (2:23) So yeah, Dodge City was his childhood backdrop.

(2:25) And we have those school reports, 1900, 1901. It does make you wonder, (2:31) what was school like for a kid back then, right at the start of the century? (2:34) It really does. And the census records back this up.

1900, he's listed as a six-year-old son. (2:40) 1905, he's 11. Both times, still in Dodge City, still with his father.

(2:45) Seems like a pretty stable early life there. (2:47) Yeah, a typical small town Kansas upbringing, maybe. (2:50) And his schooling continued.

Another record in 1909. (2:53) That's right. (2:54) By the 1910 census, he's 16, still there.

(2:56) Still there. And then by 1915, we see him sort of moving into adulthood. (3:01) The Kansas census that year lists him age 21, working as a clerk.

(3:05) A clerk in Dodge City. (3:06) In Dodge City. (3:07) Yeah.

(3:08) And the 1916 city directory confirms it. Living there, working, part of the local scene. (3:13) It's amazing how these seemingly dry facts start to build a picture, a real person.

(3:18) Exactly. (3:19) Okay. Let's shift to that next big phase.

Early career, and then, of course, World War I. (3:24) Right. So, December 1916. This is just before the U.S. officially jumps into the war.

(3:30) Leon starts working for the railroad. (3:33) 18SF. (3:33) The Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe.

(3:35) Yeah. (3:35) Western Division in Dodge City. His roles were things like yard helper, switchman.

(3:40) So, moving cars around. (3:42) Exactly. Essential stuff for keeping the trains organized.

And also, engine fireman. (3:47) Helping run the steam engine. (3:48) Right.

Assisting the engineer, keeping the fire going. Physically demanding work. (3:52) Definitely.

And crucial work, especially with the war effort gearing up. (3:56) But that railroad career got put on hold pretty fast, didn't it? (3:59) It did. April 22nd, 1917.

Leon enlists. (4:03) Right. (4:03) Right there in Dodge City.

(4:04) And gets going immediately. (4:05) Leaves for Ft. Logan, Colorado, the very same day.

That's quite something. (4:09) His active service starts just days later, April 26th. He's assigned as a wagoner, (4:14) second-class gunner.

(4:15) A wagoner. So, driving wagons. (4:17) Likely, yeah.

Transporting supplies. Maybe ammo. Equipment for his unit.

(4:22) The 25th anti-aircraft battery. First AA sector. Artillery support.

(4:26) And we even know his community noticed that detail about the Methodist Sunday (4:29) school honoring him in June 1917. (4:32) Yeah. It shows that local support, doesn't it? (4:34) Yeah.

(4:34) For the boys going off to war. (4:36) It really does. (4:37) And his service took him places.

November 17, he's at Footberry in San Francisco. (4:41) Okay. West Coast.

(4:42) Then by January 1918, his address is with the American Expeditionary Forces, the AEF, (4:48) via New York. So, he's heading to Europe. (4:50) And he saw action in France.

Significant action. (4:53) He definitely did. From late March to the end of May 1918, (4:57) he was a wagoner at St. Misner during the Second Battle of the Marne.

(5:00) A really key battle. (5:01) Absolutely. A major turning point.

And then he also served in the outer defenses of Paris, (5:06) again as a wagoner, from June right through to November 8th, 1918, just before the armistice. (5:11) It's hard to imagine, really. Someone from Dodge City, Kansas, (5:15) facing all that.

The scale of it. (5:17) Intense and dangerous, no doubt about it. (5:19) We also know about his trip back, right? After the war ended.

(5:23) We do. February 20th, 1919, he set sail from Brest, France, on the USS Ohio. (5:29) Homeward bound.

(5:30) And we have that telegram. Sent March 15th, 1919, from Camp Stuart, Virginia. (5:35) Just letting his parents know he'd arrived safely.

He was okay. (5:37) Oh, that must have been such a relief for them back home. Just getting that word.

(5:41) You can only imagine. Such a small thing. A telegram, but meaning everything.

(5:46) Yeah. And thankfully, he got back to Kansas relatively soon after that. (5:49) Yes.

Honorable discharge on March 28th, 1919, at Camp Funston, Kansas. (5:54) Right here in Kansas. (5:55) And he was back home in Dodge City by April 10th, 1919.

(5:59) So the return journey was pretty efficient, all things considered. (6:01) Quite a chapter. Service, survival, homecoming.

So what happens next? (6:05) Host war life, family, back to the railroad. (6:08) Exactly. He didn't wait long to start the next phase.

December 24th, 1919, Christmas Eve, (6:14) he marries Winnie Letha Curry. (6:16) In Dodge City. (6:17) In Dodge City.

So settling down, building a family after everything he'd been through. (6:21) And picking up where he left off with work. (6:23) Pretty much seamlessly.

In 1920, the records show him boarding at 504 Avenue G, (6:29) and yep, working again as a switchman for the ATNSF. (6:33) Yeah, back on the railway. (6:34) Back on the railway.

(6:34) Yeah. (6:35) The 1920 census confirms it. Head of household now, age 25, railroad switchman.

That's his path. (6:42) And the records show the beginning of his family, too. A daughter.

(6:45) Yes. Betty Jean Crawford, born May 13th, 1921, in Dodge City. (6:49) Ah.

(6:50) But the records also suggest, sadly, that she passed away while still an infant. (6:54) It's one of those heartbreaking details you find. (6:56) Yeah.

Life's ups and downs right there in the documents. (6:58) We also see a little blip. He wasn't on the railroad payroll in October 1923.

(7:03) We don't know why. Could be anything. (7:04) But he was back soon enough.

(7:06) Okay. And life moves on. A new address by 1924.

(7:09) Yep. 510 Avenue G in Dodge City. These little moves, they track his life within the town.

(7:14) The 1925 Kansas census catches him there. Still head of household. 31 now.

Still a switchman. (7:20) The railroad is the constant threat. (7:22) It really is.

But he was involved in other things, too, wasn't he? (7:25) That church membership seems significant. (7:27) Extremely. The Barofet class at the First United Methodist Church.

(7:31) He was a member from 1927, basically until he died in 1976. (7:36) Wow. Almost 50 years.

That's incredible dedication. (7:39) It really speaks volumes about his connection to the community, maybe his faith. (7:43) And around that time, more family joy.

(7:45) His son, Eugene David Trafford, was born December 8, 1927. (7:50) New life in the family. (7:52) And his war service, it stays part of his identity.

(7:54) In 1930, he's officially enrolled as a WWI-X serviceman, lists his old unit, (8:01) the 25th Anti-Aircraft Battery. (8:04) Still proud of that service. (8:05) Seems so.

The 1930 census again shows him head of household. 36 years old. Still a switchman.

(8:10) Still plugging away on the railroad. (8:11) Yep. August 1935, specific mention of him, (8:14) employed at the Western train and yard by AT&SF in Dodge City.

(8:17) Just reinforcing that long tenure. (8:19) And the family grows again later in the 30s. (8:21) Another son, Leon Russell Crawford II, born November 10, 1938.

(8:25) Named after him. (8:26) Named after him. (8:27) And around this time, 1939 to 42, the family's living at 512 Avenue G. Another address change.

(8:33) Keeping track. The 1940 census confirms that. (8:36) It does.

He's 46, head of household, 512 Avenue G. Still a railroad switchman. (8:42) You know, life seems pretty established, even with another war starting in Europe. (8:46) And he still registered for the draft in 42, even though he was in his late 40s by then.

(8:51) Yeah. Shows he was still connected to national events, fulfilling that duty, (8:55) even if he wasn't going to be called up again at that age. (8:58) And we get another glimpse of family responsibility in 43.

(9:01) He took out a loan for his father-in-law, Hiram Curry's burial costs. (9:05) Supporting the extended family. (9:06) Exactly.

Then, as the war ends and things move into the later 40s, (9:10) we see him and Winnie putting down deeper roots. They buy land together in July 47. (9:16) Investing in Dodge City.

(9:18) Seems like it. They get a real estate loan approved that October. Building their future there.

(9:22) And he's still there in 1950, still with the railroad. (9:24) Absolutely. A lifetime of service unfolding.

(9:27) So, moving into the 1950s, after all those years as a switchman, (9:31) did his role change? We see a promotion mentioned. (9:34) Yes. It looks like his dedication paid off.

(9:36) By 1953, he's listed as a foreman for the AT&SF in Dodge City. (9:41) Foreman. Okay.

So, supervising others. (9:43) Likely. Yeah.

Overseeing a crew of switchmen, coordinating work in the yard, (9:48) more responsibility. Definitely a step up. It shows his experience was valued.

(9:52) And a new address around then, too. (9:54) Right. He and Winnie moved to 911 Second Owl.

(9:57) City directories from 55, 57, 59 confirmed they're living there. (10:01) And they list him as foreman. (10:02) Yes.

Though sometimes also as engine foreman or switchman still. (10:07) Maybe his exact title shifted a bit, or perhaps the directory listings weren't perfectly precise, (10:11) but clearly in a supervisory capacity by then. (10:14) Okay.

And his veteran status remained important. (10:17) It seems so. We know he was a member of the local VFW post Veterans of Foreign Wars.

(10:22) Keeping that connection. (10:23) And they even took some trips. A bit of travel later in life.

(10:26) Yeah. We have a note about a trip in August 1959 to Taos, New Mexico, and Arizona. (10:32) A nice break, you'd think, after all those years on the job.

(10:35) Definitely deserved. And still involved with the church. (10:37) Oh, yes.

That First United Methodist Church membership was lifelong, as we saw. (10:42) So 1960, still at 911 Second Avenue, there's a land transaction mentioned. (10:47) A little interesting detail, yeah.

In January 1960, he sold the land they owned to his wife, Winnie. (10:55) Any idea why? (10:56) Could be anything, really. Maybe estate planning as they got older, (10:58) simplifying things, or just personal financial reasons.

Hard to say for sure from just the record. (11:03) Okay. And then the big one, retirement.

(11:06) Yes. May 13th, 1960, Leon retires from the AT&SF Railroad. (11:12) Officially listed as a switchman at retirement, despite the foreman roles earlier.

(11:16) Wow. The end of an era for him. Over 40 years.

(11:20) Incredible service, and it's nice to see the railroad acknowledged it. (11:23) He got a lifetime pass for travel on all Santa Fe lines. (11:26) That's a great purpose.

(11:27) And a certificate of honor. A good send-off. (11:29) It really is.

But retirement years aren't always easy. There was sadness too, wasn't there? (11:33) Unfortunately, yes. Just the next year, February 1961, (11:37) he had to bury his son, Leon Russell Crawford II, the one named after him.

(11:42) Oh, that's heartbreaking. (11:43) Yeah. Buried right there in Maple Grove Cemetery in Dodge City.

(11:46) We know Leon was still living in Dodge City in 62, dealing with that loss, adjusting to retirement. (11:52) Life keeps going. He received another honor a few years later.

(11:55) He did. In 1967, he got his 50-year veteran's emblem from the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen. (12:01) 50 years as a member of the union.

(12:03) Another testament to his long career and connection to the railroad world. (12:08) And that same year, October 67, is when he prepaid his funeral services. Planning ahead.

(12:14) Practical. And a happy milestone followed. (12:16) A very happy one.

December 1969, he and Winnie celebrated their golden wedding anniversary. (12:22) 50 years married. (12:23) Amazing.

Through war, peace, raising a family, that long career. (12:28) Quite a partnership. And the records show him still living in Dodge City in 71 and 72, (12:33) enjoying those later years.

(12:34) Still involved in the community too. Any other memberships? (12:37) Yes. In December 1973, he was noted as a member of St. Bernard Lodge, number 222 AF and AM.

(12:43) The Mason. (12:44) Right. The Masonic Lodge in Dodge City.

So, maintaining those fraternal ties as well. (12:48) Then, near the very end of his life. (12:51) In September 1976, they sold the house at 911 2nd Avenue.

(12:55) Getting affairs in order, perhaps? (12:57) Perhaps. Because just shortly after, on October 3, 1976, Leon passed away. He was 82 years old.

(13:04) Died in Dodge City, the place that had been his home for almost his entire life. (13:07) 82 years. A long life.

His funeral was held there. (13:11) Yes. October 6, 1976, in Dodge City.

And he was buried in Maple Grove Cemetery alongside his son. (13:17) A tombstone was purchased soon after. The final record.

(13:20) Until that modern genetic link. (13:22) Right. That fascinating coda.

December 2022, his Y-DNA haplogroup assigned, (13:29) RFT99128, connects him to this vast ancient lineage. (13:33) A modern science perspective on this life from the past. (13:35) What an incredible journey we've just taken, really, (13:38) following Leon Russell Crawford through all those documents.

(13:40) From that baby in the 1895 census. (13:43) To the World War I wagoner, the lifelong railroad man, the husband, father, community member. (13:47) Through to 1976.

It really paints a picture of, well, an American life spanning most of the 20th (13:52) century. (13:53) It really does. And his life, you know, it mirrors so many big changes.

The (13:58) importance of the railroad, the huge impact of World War I. (14:01) The stability people found in those long careers and community ties. (14:05) Exactly. That four-decade career with the railroad, it just speaks volumes about dedication.

(14:11) Maybe finding security in a world that was changing so fast. (14:14) And it's just remarkable how these, you know, official papers, city directories, (14:18) census forms, things that might seem kind of mundane can actually build such a detailed, (14:23) personal story. (14:25) It's true.

We get a surprisingly rich picture of this one individual's life through extraordinary (14:30) times. (14:31) It definitely makes you stop and think, doesn't it? (14:33) About our own records, the digital trails we leave, the official documents. (14:37) What story will they tell? (14:39) What will future historians or maybe even just curious descendants piece together about us, (14:44) about our time, from the records we create, often without even thinking about it? (14:48) What insights will they find? (14:50) It's a fascinating thought to end on.

What will our data say about us?

Why ABC?

By Marcia Crawford Philbrick
May 10, 2025
Artificial Intelligence,Crawford
https://heartlandgenealogy.org/2025/05/10/why-abc/

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CRAWFORD
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Have you heard about Randy Seaver's innovative use of AI in his Ancestral Biography Creation (ABC) process? This multi-step approach transforms what might otherwise be a dry and static RootsMagic printout into something far more engaging—turning basic genealogical facts into a compelling narrative, poem, song lyrics, or even a podcast.

While I may not follow every step in the ABC process, I've begun experimenting with creating these enriched biographies for my ancestors and close relatives. One important lesson I've learned along the way is that the old adage "garbage in, garbage out" definitely applies—AI tools produce better results when I supply them with richer, more detailed source material.

As a former user of The Master Genealogist, I was accustomed to generating narrative sentences from recorded facts. However, I didn't always take the extra step of enhancing those sentences with detailed notes. To improve the input for AI, I decided to go back and add full transcriptions of newspaper articles to the note fields in my RootsMagic profile for my grandfather, Leon Crawford. I then generated a PDF narrative report from that profile and submitted it to ChatGPT, using a version of Randy's suggested prompt—but with a twist: I specifically asked ChatGPT to use the newspaper articles to enrich the final biography.

> You are an expert genealogist. Attached is a PDF file containing information about one of my ancestors. Italicized text is from newspaper articles. Please create a draft biography from the attached file, including parents, siblings, spouses and children (with birth and death dates and places), summarize life events, and add historical facts as appropriate, but do not add or embellish any extra genealogical details. *Please use the newspaper articles and/or excerpts to enhance the biography.* Use section headings. Expand the

> information in each section to add more details. The tone should be casual and suitable for family members.

In subsequent prompts, I asked ChatGPT to expand each section and to create a section for Historical Context.

Leon Russel Crawford (1894–1976)

A Life Rooted in Duty, Family, and Dodge City

Early Life and Family Roots

Leon Russel Crawford was born on February 6, 1894, in Newton, Kansas, the first son of Judson Foster Crawford and Josie Winifred Hammond. His birth was announced in the *Daily Republican* just a few days later:
"Born – To Mr. and Mrs. J. Crawford, of Allison Street, a son."

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Not long after his birth, Leon's family relocated west to Dodge City, Kansas, a move that would set the stage for the rest of his life. At just one year old, Leon was recorded on the 1895 Kansas census in Dodge City, where his father was already establishing their household. The Crawfords would live for decades at 504 Avenue G, a familiar address in town.

Leon grew up with several siblings, including brothers Marion and Hugh and sisters Bernice, Helen, Eshter and Lois. The family was active in the community and deeply rooted in the Methodist Church. Early school records show Leon attended local schools in Dodge City through at least 1909, with report cards and grade listings documenting his progress.

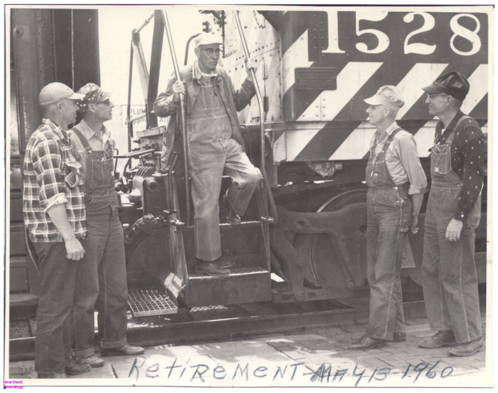
By the time he was a teenager, Leon was already working and contributing to the household. In 1915, he was listed in the Kansas census as a 21-year-old clerk. His early life was grounded in hard work, strong faith, and the rhythms of small-town Kansas life.

Railroad Career and Lifelong Work

Leon's working life began in earnest in 1916 when he joined the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway. He started out as a yard helper and switchman on the Western Division, working in the bustling yards of Dodge City. The railroads were lifelines of American commerce, and Leon quickly found himself part of a larger system that kept goods and people moving across the country.

Over the next four decades, Leon built a career with the Santa Fe Railroad. His roles included switchman, yardman, and eventually engine foreman. He was known as a reliable and steady worker, and the railroad would become a central part of his identity.

In 1960, after more than 40 years of service, Leon retired from the Santa Fe. The *Dodge City Globe* honored the occasion with a photo and article titled “Railroad Man Retires,” showing him stepping down from a locomotive surrounded by coworkers. That moment symbolized the close of a long and dedicated career.



Answering the Call: World War I Service

With the U.S. entry into World War I, Leon was quick to respond. On April 22, 1917, he enlisted in the Army and reported to Ft. Logan, Colorado. Just days later, the *Dodge City Globe* listed his name among the local men volunteering for artillery service.

Leon served in the First Anti-Aircraft Battalion and was stationed in France for over a year. He fought in significant campaigns, including the Second Battle of the Marne and the defense of Paris. He served as a wagoner—handling munitions and transport—and manned large anti-aircraft guns that helped bring down enemy planes.

In a letter published in the *Globe* in September 1918, Leon described the power of the French “75s” and the success of his unit in downing a German aircraft. He was one of many young men who faced the horrors of war with quiet courage and duty.

Leon Russel - 1917

After the war ended, Leon sailed home aboard the U.S.S. Ohio in February 1919. He sent a telegram to his parents from Camp Stuart, Virginia, reassuring them:
“Arrived here all OK am well and have written.”

He was officially discharged at Camp Funston, Kansas, on March 28, 1919. A local article reported his safe return and noted that he had participated in several major battles without injury.

Marriage, Home Life, and Children

On December 24, 1919, just months after returning from war, Leon married **Winnie Letha Currey** in Dodge City. The couple quickly settled into married life, renting a home and establishing themselves in the community.

They welcomed three children over the next two decades:

- **Betty Jean Crawford** was born on May 13, 1921, but tragically died the same day.
- **Eugene David Crawford** was born on December 8, 1927. He would go on to serve in the Navy and later become a teacher in Emporia, Kansas. Eugene married and had children of his own.
- **Leon Russel Crawford II** was born on November 10, 1938, but sadly passed away at the age of 22 on February 10, 1961, in Wisconsin.

Leon and Winnie raised their children in Dodge City, living at various addresses including Avenue G and later 911 Second Avenue. They were devoted members of the First United Methodist Church, where Leon was active in the Baraca Class.

Family life was at the center of Leon’s world. He witnessed both the joys of new births and the sorrows of premature loss. Despite life’s hardships, he and Winnie remained a strong and loving couple, celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary in December 1969 with an open house hosted by their son Eugene and his family.

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Community Involvement and Civic Life

Beyond work and family, Leon was deeply engaged in his community. He was a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, reflecting his service during World War I. He also belonged to the Masonic lodge in Dodge City, where he remained a member for many years.

Throughout his life, Leon participated in local church and civic events. He and Winnie made real estate investments, helped care for aging relatives, and were known for their hospitality. Even after retirement, Leon stayed active—traveling to New Mexico and Arizona in 1959 and remaining involved in church functions.

In 1967, he received a 50-Year Veteran's Emblem from the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen, a recognition of his long-standing loyalty to the railroad and his fellow workers.

Final Years and Legacy

Leon remained in Dodge City until the end of his life. In 1960, he transferred property to his wife Winnie, and they continued to live comfortably at 911 Second Avenue. He prearranged his funeral with Hulpieu-Swaim Funeral Home and left his affairs in order.

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Leon passed away on October 3, 1976, at Trinity Hospital in Dodge City at the age of 82. His obituary in the *Dodge City Globe* celebrated his long life and commitment to service, both military and civilian. Funeral services were held at the Hulpieu-Swaim Chapel with burial at Maple Grove Cemetery.

His gravestone sits beside those of his loved ones, a quiet monument to a life well lived—marked by duty, love, and deep Kansas roots.

Historical Context

Leon Russel Crawford's life spanned from 1894 to 1976—a period of enormous change in America and the world. Born just a few decades after the end of the Civil War, Leon came of age during the Progressive Era, a time of economic growth, railroad expansion, and social reform.

When Leon was a child in Dodge City, Kansas, the town was transitioning from its wild frontier days into a more settled and bustling railroad hub. The arrival of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway had transformed Dodge City into a vital stop for cattle, grain, and people traveling west. For a young man like Leon, growing up surrounded by trains, it's no surprise he found a lifelong career with the railroad.

World War I was a pivotal event in Leon's life and in U.S. history. When the U.S. entered the war in April 1917, it was the first major conflict the country had fought on European soil. Leon was part of a wave of young American men who volunteered for service. His unit, the 1st Anti-Aircraft Battalion, reflected the modern nature of warfare—focusing on defense against aerial attacks, a technology that had only recently emerged.

Following the war, the U.S. experienced the Roaring Twenties, the Great Depression, and World War II. Though Leon did not serve in the second world war, he supported the war effort through work and by registering for the draft in 1942. His son Eugene would go on to serve in the Navy during WWII, continuing the family's legacy of service.

During the postwar years, Dodge City grew and modernized. The Santa Fe Railroad remained central to its economy, and Leon continued his work through the 1950s, a period of stability and prosperity for many Americans. The town retained its strong community character, and families like the Crawfords were integral to civic life, local churches, and veterans' organizations.

By the time of Leon's retirement in 1960, America was on the brink of the space race, civil rights movement, and cultural shifts of the 1960s and 1970s. Though he lived to see these changes, Leon's life remained anchored in the values and routines of an earlier generation: service, family, hard work, and faith.

While the above biography was generated quickly, a few errors required correction.

For example, the biography mistakenly identified Marion Crawford as Leon's older brother, when in fact Leon was the eldest son. Additionally, several of Leon's sisters were not mentioned at all and should have been included for a more complete family picture.

One notable inaccuracy was the claim that Eugene Crawford had a career as a dentist. Since no one in the family held that profession, it's unclear where this detail originated—but it was easy to correct with accurate family information.

Conclusion

Creating this expanded biography of my grandfather, Leon Russel Crawford, has been a meaningful journey—one that blends documented facts, newspaper stories, and cherished family memories. With the help of AI tools and the Ancestral Biography Creation process, I was able to bring his story to life in a way that honors not just the dates and places, but the man behind them.

From his service in World War I to his decades working for the Santa Fe Railroad, Leon lived a life of quiet dedication to his family, community, and country. Including photos alongside his story makes the connection even more personal—reminding us that behind every record is a life fully lived.

As I continue building these biographies for other relatives, I'm reminded of the value in preserving and sharing our family's legacy—one story at a time.

Saturday Night Genealogy Fun

By Marcia Crawford Philbrick
May 11, 2025
Briles,Crawford
https://heartlandgenealogy.org/2025/05/11/saturday-night-genealogy-fun-155/

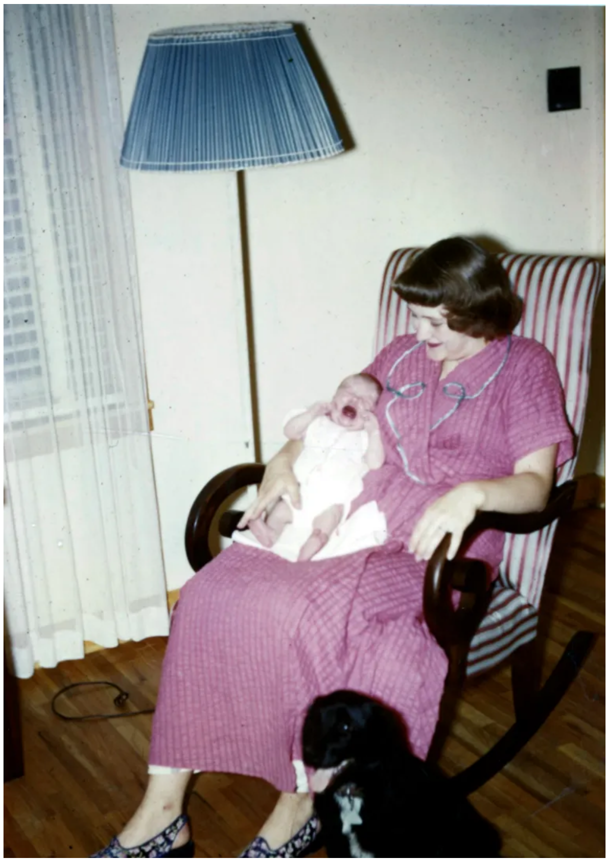
Calling all Genea-Musings Fans:

It's Saturday Night again –

Time for some more Genealogy Fun!!

Your mission, should you decide to accept it (cue the Mission Impossible! music) is to:

1) Sunday, 11 May is Mother's Day in the USA. Let's celebrate it by showing some of our photos with our mother.



Previous posts – Include many more photos:

- Band Member
- Wedding Tales
- My Baby Brothers
- Mom
- Mother’s Day
- Roberta Adell Briles Crawford

Sharing ABC Biographies

By Marcia Crawford Philbrick
May 12, 2025
Artificial Intelligence
https://heartlandgenealogy.org/2025/05/12/sharing-abc-biographies/

HEARTLAND GENEALOGY
AI
AI

As a blogger, have you ever wondered whether your posts are actually reaching your cousins—the very people who share your family history? While I have a loyal group of regular readers, most of them aren't related to me. As I begin using AI tools to turn my RootsMagic data into engaging biographies, I'm rethinking how and where I share these stories.

If my goal is to reach cousins, then I need to publish these biographies in places where they are most likely to look—genealogy platforms where they're already researching and building trees.

Here's my current plan for sharing AI-enhanced biographies:

- **Upload the PDF biography to the Gallery section of the individual's profile on Ancestry**
- **Add the same PDF to the Memories tab on their FamilySearch profile**
- **Copy and paste the biography content into their WikiTree profile**, placing it above any existing narrative and sources
- **Use MyHeritage's AI Biography tool** to generate a version tailored to that platform
- **Publish the biography on my blog**, where I can include personal commentary, images, and multimedia

As for the creative elements—poems, songs, and podcast episodes—I'll likely share those exclusively here on the blog, where there's more room for expression and storytelling.

For example, Leon Russel Crawford's biography was shared on May 3, 2025, and has been posted in the following places:

- **Gallery on Ancestry –** Leon R. Crawford
- **Memory on FamilySearch** – Leon R. Crawford
- **WikiTree** – Full narrative added to the profile
- **MyHeritage** – AI Biography created using their tool
- **Heartland Genealogy blog** – Complete with expanded narrative, images, and a custom song: *“Tracks thru Time”*

Now, it’s a matter of waiting to see how well these platforms handle AI-generated content—and whether cousins find their way to these stories.

Was Oliver Miles a Minute Man

By Marcia Crawford Philbrick
May 13, 2025
Massachusetts
https://heartlandgenealogy.org/2025/05/13/was-oliver-miles-a-minute-man/

IN CONGRESS July 4, 1776.
The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America
Revolutionary War
AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

Do you have ancestors who served in the Revolutionary War? If so, do you know which battles they fought in? While I've identified some of the colonies my patriot ancestors served with, I haven't yet fully researched the specific battles they may have participated in.

That curiosity was sparked again during the 250th anniversary of Paul Revere's ride and the Battles of Lexington and Concord. I wondered—did any of my ancestors take part in those historic events? To find out, I searched my RootsMagic database for events tied to Concord, Massachusetts. Among the results was my 4th great-grandfather, Oliver Miles, who was born in 1772 in Concord, Middlesex County. His birth date and place suggest his father, also named Oliver Miles, could have been present during the Battle of Concord in 1775.

According to the *History of the Town of Concord*, Oliver Miles (the elder) served under Captain Jonathan Brooks in 1757, when they marched to support Fort William Henry. The book states that Miles was captured and spent three months in captivity—an experience that confirms his service in the local militia.

Later research led me to a Sons of the American Revolution (SAR) application that listed Oliver Miles as a "minute man." However, I've not been able to verify this claim in the known rosters of Concord's militia or minute men from 1775. That said, *Massachusetts Soldiers and Sailors of the Revolutionary War* does confirm that an Oliver Miles served as a private in a Concord company that marched to Roxbury in 1776.

While I haven't yet proven that Oliver Miles fought at Concord in April 1775, the records clearly place him among those who served during the Revolutionary War. His 1776 service to Roxbury and earlier captivity in 1757 illustrate a lifetime of dedication to the defense of his community. Like many early patriots, his story may be partially hidden in fragmented records—but each piece brings me closer to understanding the role my ancestors played in the birth of our nation.

Narrative Report for Oliver Miles

Oliver Miles was born on 11 Sep 1738 in Concord Middlesex Massachusetts. [1–2]

On 17 Aug 1757, he served in the military being wounded, taken prisoner, stripped naked and held for 3 months during the battle at Fort William Henry. [3–4]

Oliver served in the military as a private in a Concord company commanded by Lieut. Ephraim Wheeler and Col. Eleazer Brooks in 1776 in Concord, Middlesex County, Massachusetts Bay Colony. [8–9]

He marched to Roxbury to reinforce Continental Army near Boston in 1776 in Massachusetts Bay Colony, British Colonial America. [8]

He lived in Concord, Middlesex County, Massachusetts in 1800. [10]

Oliver died on 3 Nov 1820 at the age of 82 in Concord, Middlesex County, Massachusetts. [1,11–13]

He was buried at South Burying Place in Concord, Middlesex County, Massachusetts. [1]

Oliver Miles and Martha Stone were married about 1761 in of Framingham, Middlesex, Massachusetts, USA. [14]

Martha Stone, daughter of Joseph Stone and Lydia Parkhurst, was born in 1741.

She died in 1813 at the age of 72.

ENDNOTES:

1. Find a Grave, database and images, Find a Grave (www.findagrave.com : viewed online 24 April 2025), memorial for Oliver Miles (1738-1820), Find a Grave Memorial no. 24340714, created by Bill Boyington, citing South Burying Place, Concord, Middlesex County, Massachusetts; accompanying photograph by Bill Boyington, Oliver Miles.

2. “Massachusetts, Town Birth Records, 1620-1850,” database online, New England Historic Genealogical Society, Ancestry.com (www.ancestry.com : viewed online 24 April 2025), Oliver Miles.

3. Lemuel Shattuck, History of the Town of Concord (Boston: Russell, Odiorne and Company, 1835), 72; digitized, Archive.org, http://www.archive.org viewed online 25 April 2025.

4. Biographical Sketches of Representative Citizens, Massachusetts edition (Boston: Graves & Steinbarger, Publishers, 1901), page 341; digitized, Archive.org, http://www.archive.org viewed online 25 April 2025.

5. “Massachusetts, Town Birth Records, 1620-1850,” database online, New England Historic Genealogical Society, Ancestry.com (www.ancestry.com : viewed online November 2019), Oliver Miles.

6. Jonas Michael Miles, Miles Genealogy: John Miles of Concord, Massachusetts and His Descendants (Boston: C.E. Goodspeed & Company, 1920), page 12; books.google.com viewed online November 2016.

7. Massachusetts, Town Clerk, Vital and Town Records, 1626-2001. Film #004934223. Oliver Miles, 12 Dec 1855; Stowe: 115; 178 of 234, Digitized images, FamilySearch http://www.familysearch.org : viewed online 25 April 2025.

8. Massachusetts, Soldiers and Sailors int he Revolutionary War, Oliver Miles, 1776; digitized images, Ancestry.com (www.ancestry.com : viewed online 24 April 2025).

9. Massachusetts Society of the Sons of the American Revolution, Soldiers and Sailors Whose Graves Have Been Designated byt he Marker of the Society (Boston: Massachusetts Society of the Sons of the American Revolution, 1901),

page 17; digital image, Wikimedia, wikimedia.org viewed online 24 April 2025.

10. 1800 U.S. Census, Middlesex County, Massachusetts, population schedule, Middlesex County, Massachusetts, Image 9 of 11, Oliver Miles; digital image, Ancestry.com (www.ancestry.com : viewed online 24 April 2025)

11. Newspaper Extractions form the Northeast, 1704-1930, Oliver Miles found in Columbian Centinel published 22 Nov 1820, 1820; database and images, Ancestry.com (www.ancestry.com : viewed online 25 April 2025). Original Source: Nerspapers and Periodicals. American Antiquarian Society.

12. Massachusetts, Town and Vital Records 1620-1988, Oliver Miles, 1820; digitl image, Ancestry http://www.ancestry.com : viewed online 24 April 2025).

13. “Massachusetts, Town Death Records, 1620-1850,” Ancestry.com (www.ancestry.com : Concord, Massachusetts, viewed online (24 April 2025), Oliver Miles.

14. Sons of the American Revolution Membership Applications, 1889-1970, Charles Hobert Kinsman thru Oliver Miles, 1944; database with images, Ancestry.com (www.ancestry.com : viewed online 24 April 2025).

Questioning

By Marcia Crawford Philbrick
May 14, 2025
Uncategorized
https://heartlandgenealogy.org/2025/05/14/questioning/

HEARTLAND
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Nafus Family

Nafus Family on Heartland Genealogy

Unraveling the Parentage of Helen Bryant

Do you ever come across a record that raises new questions about the structure of a family? That was exactly my experience when researching the family of **Daniel R. Bryant**.

According to the FamilySearch tree, Daniel and his first wife, **Mary Lois Andrews**, had a daughter named **Helen** [LBPK-968], born in 1890 and noted as living beyond 1955. Based on that timeline, Helen should appear in the 1900 census—and possibly the 1910 census—as a young girl. However, that wasn't the case.

The Census Conundrum

In the **1900 census**, Daniel's household includes three sons, a stepson, and a 17-year-old stepdaughter named **Cora**. There is no girl listed who would match a birth year around 1890. In fact, there is no female in the household aged 8–12 at all.

Fast forward to the **1920 census**, and a daughter named **Helen** does appear—but she is only **17 years old**, placing her birth around 1902 or 1903. This discrepancy strongly suggests that she is **not** the daughter of Daniel's first wife, Mary Lois, who died in **1891**. Instead, she is more likely the daughter of his second wife, **Sarah Caruthers**.

A Key Clue in an Obituary

A breakthrough came with the 1954 obituary of **Winfield Bryant**, Daniel's son. It includes a mention of **Mrs. Helen Hutchens of Clarkston, Georgia**, listed as one of Winfield's surviving sisters:

Winfield Bryant

LOWELL—Funeral rites will be held Saturday at 2 p.m. in the Grange Hall here for Winfield Bryant, 64, lifelong resident and former township trustee who died Tuesday in Porter Memorial Hospital, Valparaiso. […]

Surviving are five daughters […] and two sisters, **Mrs. Cora Vale of Port Arthur, Ore., and Mrs. Helen Hutchens of Clarkston, Ga.** […]

That one line helped me locate Helen's **Find a Grave** record, which listed her death as **September 26, 1993**. With that, I was able to find her full obituary in *The Atlanta Journal*, which added even more detail to her life:

HUTCHENS
Mrs. Helen B. Hutchens, age 91 of Lawrenceville, died September 26, 1993. […] She was raised in **Kansas and Indiana**, active with her husband in the Gwinnett Historical Society and a charter member of St. Andrews Presbyterian Church. She graduated with honors from the **University of Kansas**, later earned a degree in Library Science from **Emory University**, and worked as a librarian and schoolteacher in **DeKalb County, Georgia**, from 1939 to 1972.

Although her obituary does not explicitly name her parents or siblings, it places Helen in **Kansas**, **Indiana**, and **Tennessee**—locations that align with the known movements of Daniel R. Bryant and his family. Combined with her appearance as Daniel's daughter in the 1920 census, this strengthens the case that she was **not born in 1890**, but likely around **1902**, and was the daughter of **Sarah Caruthers**, not Mary Lois Andrews.

Final Thoughts

This example illustrates how even a small clue—like a name in an obituary—can open doors to deeper understanding. While I haven't yet made changes to the FamilySearch tree, I currently believe **Helen Bryant Hutchens** was born circa 1902 and is the daughter of **Daniel R. Bryant and Sarah Caruthers**. As always, more evidence would help confirm the relationship.

Your Turn

Have you used obituaries or census discrepancies to clarify family connections? Share your experiences or research puzzles in the comments below!

Oklahoma Roots: Confirming a Crawford Family Story

By Marcia Crawford Philbrick
May 15, 2025
[Crawford](https://heartlandgenealogy.org)
https://heartlandgenealogy.org/2025/05/15/oklahoma-roots-confirming-a-crawford-family-story/

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A family tradition verified through the pages of a local newspaper

Family stories are powerful. They preserve memories, convey emotion, and often fill in the blanks that formal records leave behind. For years, one such story in our family recounted a difficult chapter in the lives of **Bernice Crawford** and her younger brother **Leon Crawford**.

Heartland Genealogy
BeRNICE

According to my grandmother, the **Judson and Josie Crawford** family lived in **Oklahoma** when the children were small. During that time, both Bernice and Leon became gravely ill. Although the specifics of their illness were never clearly remembered, the story painted a picture of fear and concern as the family faced an uncertain outcome far from their familiar home in Dodge City, Kansas.

For a long time, this account remained part of our **oral history**, without any supporting documentation. Census records and land deeds yielded no clues to place the family in Oklahoma during the 1890s. Still, the memory persisted—passed from one generation to the next.

Then came a discovery in a short news item published in the **December 31, 1896 issue of *The Dodge City Globe***:

> *"Judd Crawford is here. He lives in Oklahoma."*

This simple sentence, likely overlooked by most readers, brought long-sought confirmation. It establishes that Judson Crawford—known as "Judd"—was living in Oklahoma at the time and had returned briefly to Dodge City. The timing fits perfectly with the family story: Bernice would have been just four years old, and Leon only two.

This brief mention, tucked into a local news column, breathes new life into the story. While we still lack details about the illness that affected the children, we now have tangible proof that the Crawford family had relocated to Oklahoma—just as my grandmother had always said.

It's a reminder that **oral history matters**. Sometimes, the memories preserved by our relatives carry truth that simply hasn't yet been rediscovered in the records. And occasionally, all it takes is a single line in an old newspaper to bridge the gap between memory and documented history.

Source:
The Dodge City Globe, December 31, 1896, p. 5, col. 2; digital image, Newspapers.com (viewed 2021).

Friday Find: Memorial Service

By Marcia Crawford Philbrick
May 16, 2025
Mentzer
https://heartlandgenealogy.org/2025/05/16/friday-find-memorial-service/

FRIDAY FINDS
FRIDAY FINDS
HEARTLAND GENEALOGY BLOG

Remembering PFC Lovell J. Mentzer

As I sort through my family notebooks, I recently came across a special keepsake saved by my grandmother: the memorial service program for her first cousin, Private First Class Lovell J. Mentzer, who gave his life during World War II.

MEMORIAL SERVICE
June 17, 1945, 2:30 P.M.
Methodist Church
Yates Center, Kansas

PFC Lovell J. Mentzer
United States Infantry
Son of
E. E. and Edith M. Mentzer

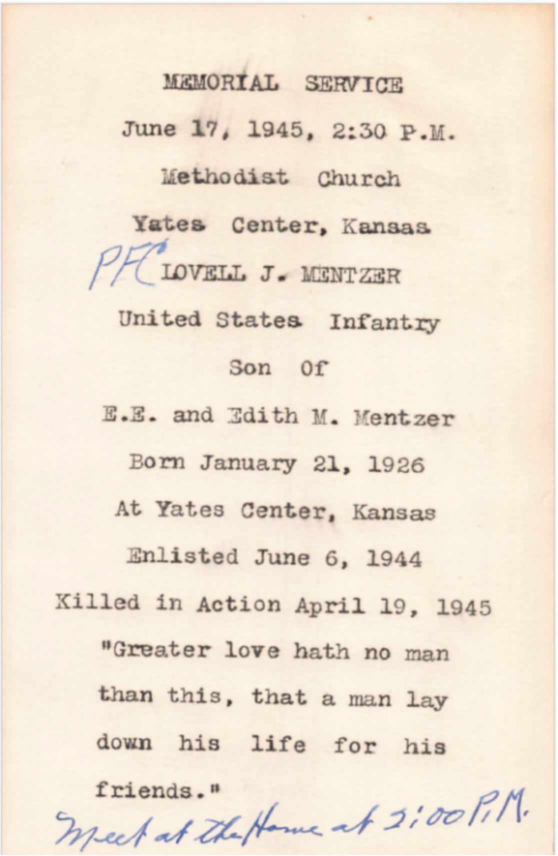
Born January 21, 1926
At Yates Center, Kansas

Enlisted June 6, 1944

Killed in Action April 19, 1945

“Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.”

(Handwritten at bottom):
Meet at the Home at 2:00 P.M.



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down his life for his
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Meet at the Home at 2:00 P.M.

This simple yet powerful program not only preserves Lovell’s birth and death dates but also offers important details about his military service — including his enlistment date, his service in the U.S. Infantry, and the ultimate sacrifice he made.

I’m so grateful that my grandmother chose to save this piece of our family history. It provides a meaningful glimpse into the life and legacy of her cousin, and reminds us of the personal cost of freedom.

ABC: Bernice Crawford

By Marcia Crawford Philbrick
May 17, 2025
Crawford
https://heartlandgenealogy.org/2025/05/17/abc-bernice-crawford/

HEARTLAND
GENEALOGY
CRAWFORD
FAMILY

Using the ABC Process to Bring Ancestors to Life

Inspired by **Randy Seaver's** *Ancestral Biography Creation (ABC) process*, I've been rethinking how I share my family history. Randy's thoughtful approach combines structured research with narrative storytelling to create rich, readable biographies of ancestors—moving beyond just names and dates to reflect the people and the times they lived in.

Following his lead, I've started applying this process to my own family research. The goal is to not only document the facts but to weave them into a story that connects generations. One of my first efforts using this method is the biography of my great aunt **Bernice Crawford**. Thanks to a mix of historical records, newspaper snippets, and even family lore, her story comes together in a way that feels much more personal and complete.

Here is Bernice's story, told through the lens of the ABC method.

Bernice Crawford Allen (1892–1959)

A Resilient Life from the Prairie to the Pacific

Early Life in Dodge City, Kansas

Bernice Crawford was born in the early morning hours of March 4, 1892, in Dodge City, Kansas, to Judson Foster Crawford and Josie Winifred Hammond Crawford. Her arrival was playfully reported in the March 10 edition of the *Dodge City Globe*:

> “We never would have thought such a thing of Judd Crawford… but murder will out, and they do say Judd is a paternal dad of an embryo young lady who made her debut into his family circle at 1 o’clock a.m., March 4, 1892.”

Heartland
Genealogy
BERNICE

Bernice was raised in a lively household with several siblings, including brothers Marion, Hugh, and Leon, and sisters Helen, Esther, and Lois. The Crawford family was deeply rooted in Dodge City, and Bernice’s childhood was shaped by the rhythms of a growing frontier town transitioning into the 20th century.

Census records trace Bernice’s childhood in Dodge City:

- In 1895, she was listed as a 3-year-old living with her family.
- By 1900, the family resided on 4th Avenue.
- In 1910, the Crawfords had moved to 504 Avenue G, and 18-year-old Bernice was still living at home.

As the daughter of a railroad man, Bernice likely learned the values of discipline, community, and resilience early on—qualities that would serve her well as a wife and mother.

Marriage and Early Family Life

On November 10, 1911, 19-year-old Bernice married **George James Allen**, a young man from Cimarron, Kansas. The ceremony took place in her parents’ home and was officiated by Reverend F. L. Templin. Guests included friends and relatives from Dodge City, Cimarron, and Scott City.

A brief announcement in the *Dodge City Globe* captured the moment:

> “Miss Bernice Crawford of this city, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. J. Crawford, and George Allen of Cimarron, were married at the Crawford home last Friday… Mr. and Mrs. Allen will make their home in Cimarron.”

The young couple settled in Cimarron, where George worked as a garage mechanic and later as a truck driver for construction firms. Life in rural Kansas during the early 1900s wasn’t easy, but together Bernice and George built a family rooted in love and perseverance.

Their early years of marriage were marked by both joy and heartbreak. The couple lost several infants in their early days together:

- A daughter born and lost on August 20, 1912
- A son born May 31, 1913, who passed the following day
- Another infant son who died in 1916
- And a fourth child lost on December 3, 1920

Despite these tragic losses, Bernice and George went on to raise four children who survived to adulthood:

- **George Judson Allen** (1914–1969)
- **Charmaine Aletha Allen** (1917–1976)
- **Bernice Arlene Allen** (1922–1988)
- **Theda Ruth Allen** (1924–1994)

Bernice’s strength and grace in the face of loss stand as a testament to her enduring character.

Life on the Move: Kansas, Arizona, and California

Throughout the 1920s, Bernice and George continued to live in Cimarron, Kansas. Their household was filled with the sounds of children, the dust of prairie winds, and the responsibilities of daily life during the Great Depression. In the 1920, 1925, and early 1930s census records, Bernice is consistently listed as a homemaker, supporting her family while George worked.

In the early 1930s, the family relocated to **Tucson, Arizona**, likely in search of more stable work and better opportunities. In 1930, they were living on East Fourth Street. By 1940, they had moved to 1500 Park Avenue, where they were raising their daughters Arlene and Theda. George was working as a truck driver for a construction company.

By 1950, the Allens had moved once again—this time to **Los Angeles, California**, where they lived at 1848½ Sawtelle Boulevard. Later in the 1950s, they relocated north to **Kelseyville** in **Lake County, California**, where they would spend their final years.

This pattern of movement—Kansas to Arizona to California—mirrors the broader migration of American families during the mid-20th century, seeking economic security and opportunity across the expanding West.

Later Years and Death

Bernice spent her last decade living in Kelseyville, a quiet town surrounded by vineyards and lake country. It was here, on August 2, 1959, that she passed away at the age of 67.

Her funeral was held at Jones Mortuary and officiated by Rev. Robert Hill. She was buried at Kelseyville Cemetery. Her obituary, preserved in family records, noted:

> “She was a native of Dodge City… She is survived by her husband, George Allen; her children, George J. Allen of Westminster, Charmaine Albis of El Cajon, Arlene Bradley of Kelseyville, and Theda Ruth Frisch of San Jose; brothers Hugh Crawford of Point Barrow, Alaska, Leon Crawford of Dodge City; sisters Helen Horton of El Paso, Texas, Esther Noll of New Mexico, Lois Madden of Pueblo, Colorado; and seven grandchildren.”

Legacy and Reflection

Bernice Crawford Allen’s life was one of perseverance, quiet strength, and deep devotion to her family. She endured the loss of multiple children in infancy, supported her husband through changing careers and relocations, and raised four children who went on to build families of their own.

She witnessed the rise of the automobile, the trials of two World Wars, and the migration of families westward. From her birth in a bustling Kansas railroad town to her final days among the vineyards of California, Bernice’s journey reflects the strength and adaptability of American women in the early 20th century.

Her memory lives on not just through her descendants, but also in the stories, newspaper clippings, and records that document a life of quiet significance.

Our Lives Together

By Marcia Crawford Philbrick
May 18, 2025
Uncategorized
https://heartlandgenealogy.org/2025/05/18/our-lives-together/

HEARTLAND GENEALOGY
HEARTLAND GENEALOGY

As I continue exploring how AI tools can assist in preserving family stories, I decided to try something a little different. With our 51st wedding anniversary approaching, I asked ChatGPT to help me reflect on the life my husband, Michael, and I have built together. From college classrooms to retirement hobbies, here's a look back at five decades of partnership, purpose, and shared passions.

A Lifelong Partnership Rooted in Science and Service

On May 18, 1974, just one day after earning their college degrees, Marcia and Michael Philbrick began a journey together that would span more than five decades. Their story began during their sophomore year of college, where a shared passion for chemistry brought them together as physical science education majors. From study sessions and lab work to long campus walks and deep conversations, their connection grew, leading to their engagement during junior year and marriage soon after graduation.

In the fall of 1974, both stepped into the world of education with enthusiasm and commitment. Michael began teaching chemistry and physics at Nemaha Valley High School, while Marcia taught the same subjects at both Centralia and Frankfort high schools. By 1976, their professional paths converged again when Marcia joined Nemaha Valley to teach biology.

Marcia's career evolved as her skills expanded beyond the science classroom. In 1985, she became the high school librarian, bringing her love of knowledge and organization to a broader audience. As technology transformed education, she embraced the challenge and, by 1992, had also taken on the role of technology coordinator. While she mastered data systems and software, she could always count on Mike to troubleshoot the hardware — a perfect blend of talents that symbolized their lifelong teamwork.

The Philbricks remained dedicated educators within the Nemaha Valley and later Nemaha Central school communities, shaping young minds and fostering curiosity until their retirement in 2016. Their shared dedication to education, learning, and one another became a defining feature of their lives.

Retirement didn't slow them down; it simply redirected their shared curiosity. Today, Marcia and Mike continue to explore the past through genealogical research, diving deep into their family histories. Just as they once unraveled the mysteries of science with their students, they now uncover the stories of those who came before them — together.

As they celebrate 51 years of marriage, theirs is a legacy of partnership, purpose, and enduring love — a testament to a life built on mutual respect, shared goals, and a passion for learning that never ends.

Saturday Night Genealogy Fun

By Marcia Crawford Philbrick
May 18, 2025
SaturdayNightGenealogyFun
https://heartlandgenealogy.org/2025/05/18/saturday-night-genealogy-fun-156/

Calling all Genea-Musings Fans:

It's Saturday Night again –

Time for some more Genealogy Fun!!

Your mission, should you decide to accept it (cue the Mission Impossible! music) is to:

1) Did you have good genealogy fun this past week? Did you add to your family Tree? Did you make a great discovery? Did you try something new? Did you make family history?

Did I have good genealogy fun this past week? Definitely!

This week reminded me just how rewarding it can be to blend genealogy with creativity and technology. I explored new ways to visualize research, organize family connections, and even experimented with making a genealogy-themed video using Canva (yes—video!). It's always satisfying when I can take traditional research and give it a modern twist.

Along the way, I reviewed some challenging ancestors, played with maps and timelines, and found myself seeing old data in new ways. That, to me, is what keeps genealogy fun—not just the discoveries, but the *process* of exploring them.

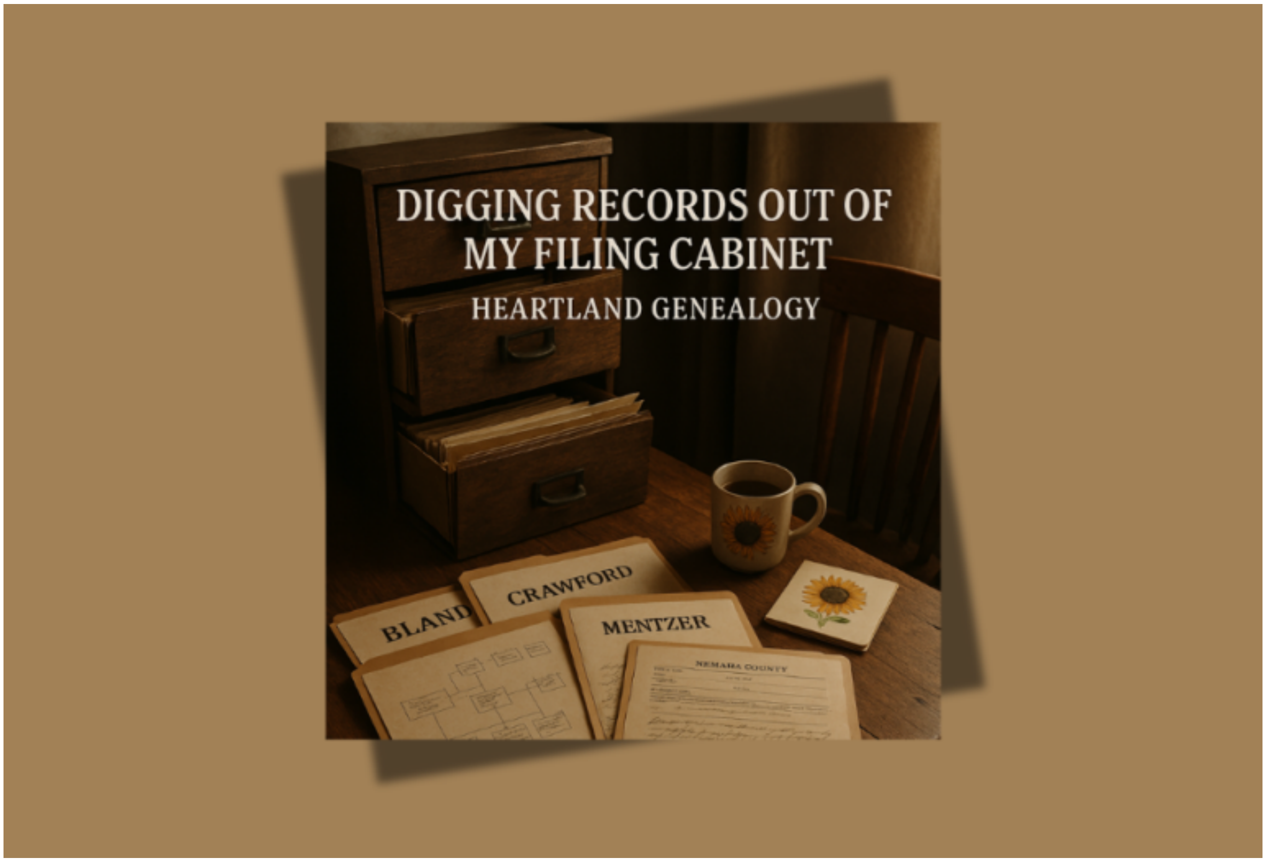
So yes, it was a great week full of genealogical inspiration, and I can't wait to keep the momentum going!

I'd like to give a special thanks to **Randy Seaver** for openly sharing how he uses AI in his genealogy work—and for continually inspiring the rest of us to apply these tools to our own research challenges.

Almost all of my recent genealogy *fun* will be featured in upcoming blog posts… so stay tuned for what's ahead!

Monday's Diggings

By Marcia Crawford Philbrick
May 19, 2025
Briles
https://heartlandgenealogy.org/2025/05/19/mondays-diggings-2/



Today's item from my filing cabinet is a photocopied obituary for my Uncle Walter. The original clipping came from the *Emporia Gazette*, the hometown newspaper of his mother and sister, who were living there at the time of his death. Although I couldn't locate a digitized version of that obituary on Newspapers.com, I did find a death notice in *The Sun* of Biloxi, Mississippi—where Uncle Walter passed away. I also located another obituary published in a Covington, Louisiana area newspaper, where he had lived for several years.

Summary of Obituaries for Walter Emory Briles

Walter Emory Briles, age 64, of Covington, Louisiana, passed away on Wednesday, July 14, 1982, at Keesler Air Force Base Hospital in Biloxi, Mississippi. A Kansas native, he had lived in Covington for the past seven years. He was a U.S. Army veteran who served for many years and retired with the rank of sergeant.

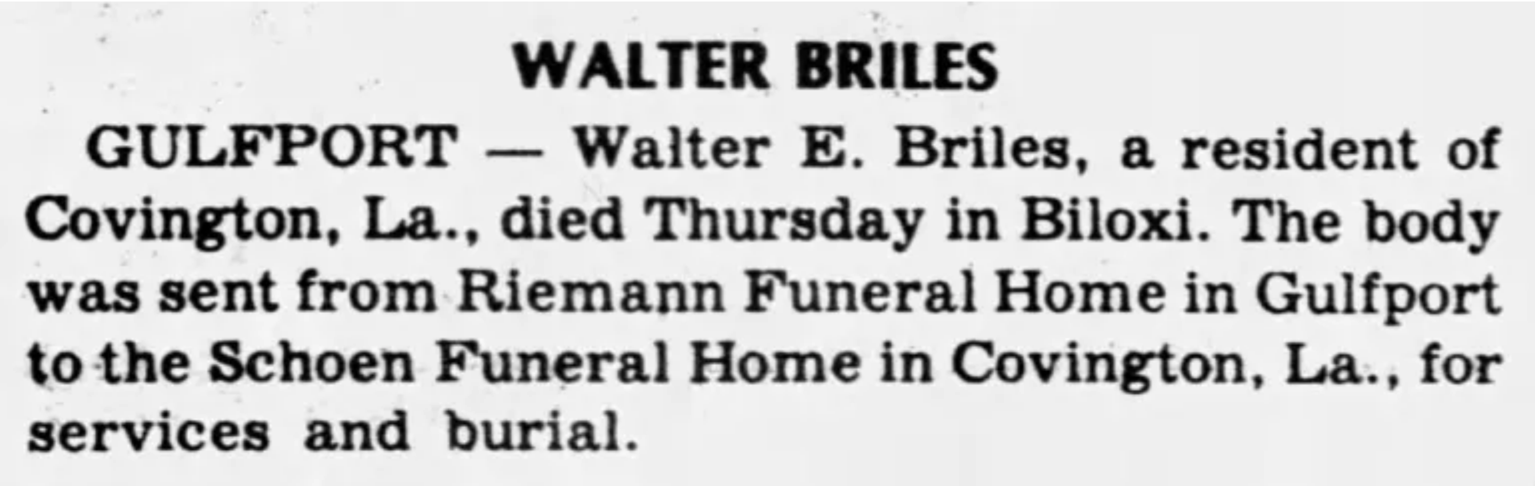
Walter was the son of Mrs. Pauline (E.O.) Briles of Emporia, Kansas. He is survived by his wife, Fay Fern Briles; two children, David Briles of Georgia and Kathleen Baham of Covington; and three grandchildren. Additional survivors include his mother; two sisters, Mrs. Eugene (Roberta) Crawford of Emporia and Mrs. George (Letha) Doolittle of San Bernardino, California.

Funeral arrangements included services in both Gulfport and Covington. His body was transported from Riemann Funeral Home in Gulfport to Schoen Funeral Home in Covington, where services were held on Saturday, July 17. Interment followed in Barker-McManus Cemetery.

Below are the transcriptions of all three articles, each offering unique details about his life and passing.

WALTER BRILES

GULFPORT — Walter E. Briles, a resident of Covington, La., died Thursday in Biloxi. The body was sent from Riemann Funeral Home in Gulfport to the Schoen Funeral Home in Covington, La., for services and burial.



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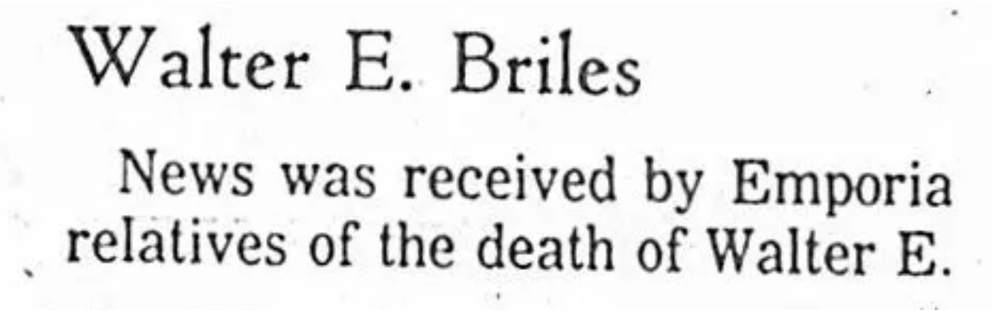
"Walter Briles," The Sun (Biloxi, Mississippi), 16 July 1982, page 4; digital images, Newspapers.com (www.newspapers.com : viewed online 19 April 2025).

Walter E. Briles

News was received by Emporia relatives of the death of Walter E.
Briles of Covington, La., who died July 14 at a hospital in Biloxi, Miss. Mr. Briles, 64, was the son of Mrs. E.O. Briles of Horizon Plaza. He was in service with the U.S. Army for many years and was a sergeant at the time of his retirement.

Services are pending.

Survivors besides his mother are his wife, Faye, who lives in Covington; one daughter and one grandson, and two sisters, Mrs. Eugene Crawford, 2314 West 21st Ave., and Mrs. George Doolittle of San Bernardino, Calif.



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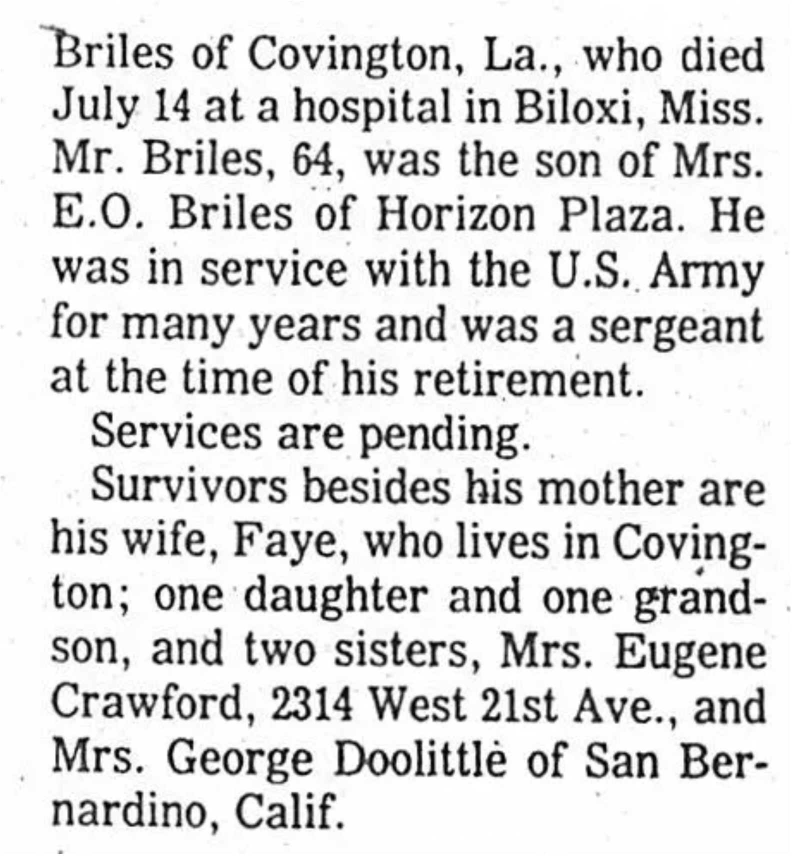

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“Walter E. Briles,” Emporia Gazette, (Emporia, KS),15 July 1982, page 2 col. 1-2; Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, Kansas

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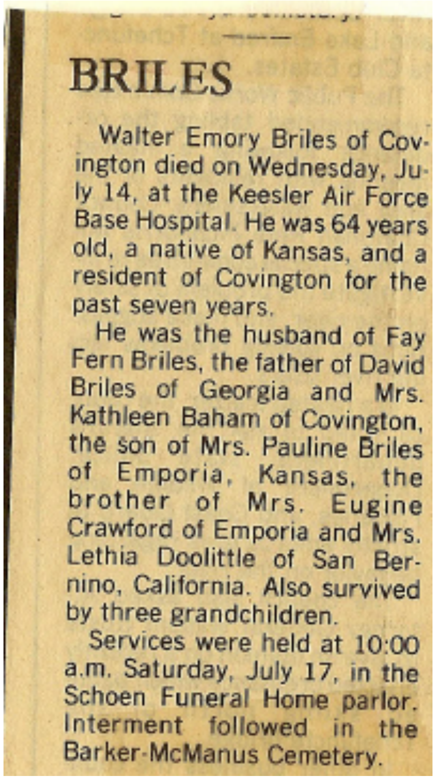
BRILES

Walter Emory Briles of Covington died on Wednesday, July 14, at the Keesler Air Force Base Hospital. He was 64 years old, a native of Kansas, and a resident of Covington for the past seven years.

He was the husband of Fay Fern Briles, the father of David Briles of Georgia and Mrs. Kathleen Baham of Covington, the son of Mrs. Pauline Briles of Emporia, Kansas, the brother of Mrs. Eugene Crawford of Emporia and Mrs. Lethia Doolittle of San Bernardino, California. Also survived by three grandchildren.

Services were held at 10:00 a.m. Saturday, July 17, in the Schoen Funeral Home parlor. Interment followed in the Barker-McManus Cemetery.



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He was the husband of Fay Fern Briles, the father of David Briles of Georgia and Mrs. Kathleen Baham of Covington, the son of Mrs. Pauline Briles of Emporia, Kansas, the brother of Mrs. Eugine Crawford of Emporia and Mrs. Lethia Doolittle of San Bernino, California. Also survived by three grandchildren.

Services were held at 10:00 a.m. Saturday, July 17, in the Schoen Funeral Home parlor. Interment followed in the Barker-McManus Cemetery.

“Covington Louisiana Newspaper Clipping”, 1982, (Covington, Louisiana), Walter Briles Obituary – Covington, LA.

Cora

By Marcia Crawford Philbrick
May 20, 2025
Nafus
https://heartlandgenealogy.org/2025/05/20/cora/

HEARTLAND
GENEALOGY
Nafus Family

Nafus Family on Heartland Genealogy

Was Cora Really Daniel Bryant's Daughter? Untangling a Family Puzzle

Have you ever tried to sort out a confusing family connection on the FamilySearch tree and questioned whether a child might be linked to the wrong parent? That's exactly the puzzle I faced while researching the descendants of Sarah Nafus Merriss.

Sarah's grandson, **Daniel R. Bryant**, is shown on FamilySearch with five children—three sons and two daughters (Cora and Helen)—with his first wife, **Mary Lois Andrews**. But when I reviewed the **1900 census**, something didn't add up.

That census lists three sons in Daniel's household:

- **Otto DeForest Bryant**
- **Clayton Carl Bryant**
- **Winfred Andrews Bryant**

However, the daughters—**Cora** and **Helen**—are conspicuously absent.

According to the tree, Cora would have been 18 in 1900, possibly already married. Helen, supposedly ten years old at the time, should have been in the household. However, it's reasonable to believe that, as a widower, Daniel may have placed his younger daughter in the care of others.

Upon further research, I concluded that **Helen** was actually the daughter of Daniel's **third wife, Sarah Caruthers**, and was born in **1902**, not 1890.

But what about **Cora**?

The Clue in the Census

The 1900 census includes two key entries:

- **Stepson Sterling Andrews**
- **Stepdaughter Cora Andrews**

Their mother is not listed in the household, but this offers an important clue. FamilySearch shows Daniel married **Mattie Kenney** (listed as Mattie Andrews in a source) in 1893. Prior to that, Mattie was married to **Myron Joseph Andrews** and had two children—**Sterling and Cora**.

This census supports the conclusion that **Cora was not Daniel's biological daughter**, but rather his stepdaughter—**Cora Jean Andrews**, daughter of Mattie and Myron Andrews.

What the Obituaries Reveal

Obituaries for Cora's brothers provide further support:

- In **Winfred Bryant's 1954 obituary**, Cora is listed as a sister:
  "two sisters, Mrs. Cora Vale of Port Arthur, Ore., and Mrs. Helen Hutchens of Clarkston, Ga."
- In **Otto Bryant's 1977 obituary**, only Helen is listed as a surviving sister.
- In **Cora's own 1970 obituary**, she is survived by **step-brother O.D. Forrest Bryant**, confirming her stepchild status in the Bryant household.

  Cora Jean Vale obituary excerpt:
  "Mrs. Vale was born Aug. 21, 1882, in Hebron, Ind., and died Feb. 21 in Coos Bay… Surviving… step-brother, O. D. Forrest Bryant…"

Confirming Cora's Identity

Researching **Cora Andrews** (rather than Cora Bryant) revealed two marriages:

- To **James Fraser Green** in 1910
- To **John Herbert Vale** in 1951

Her children and name changes across records further solidify her identity as **Cora Jean Andrews**, not the biological daughter of Daniel Bryant.

Final Conclusion

Based on census records, obituaries, and marriage records, I've concluded that **Daniel Bryant did not have a daughter named Cora**. Instead, he had a **stepdaughter**, **Cora Jean Andrews**, the daughter of **Mattie Kenney and Myron Joseph Andrews**.

ABC: Marion Richmond Crawford

By Marcia Crawford Philbrick
May 21, 2025
Artificial Intelligence
https://heartlandgenealogy.org/2025/05/21/abc-marion-richmond-crawford/

Marion Richmond Crawford (1895–1920)

Early Life

Marion Richmond Crawford was born on **October 24, 1895**, in **Dodge City, Kansas**, the son of **Judson Foster Crawford** and **Josie Winifred Hammond**. His birth was proudly announced in the *Dodge City Globe* on October 31, 1895, with the note:

"Judd Crawford was pleased with the arrival of a boy at his house on the 24th."

Marion grew up in Dodge City, appearing in several census records throughout his childhood and teen years. By 1900, he was living with his family in Dodge City's 2nd Ward and was listed as a 4-year-old Kansan-born son of J.F. Crawford. He continued to reside in the same household in the 1905 Kansas State Census and again in 1910, when he was recorded as 14 years old.

In the 1915 Kansas State Census, Marion was a 19-year-old still living with his parents in Dodge City.

Military Service

In **April 1917**, just days after the United States entered **World War I**, Marion responded to the call of duty. He enlisted in the **U.S. Army** and joined **Battery D, 13th Field Artillery**. According to the *Dodge City Daily Globe*, he was one of seven young men recruited from the Dodge City station and was initially sent to **Ft. Logan, Colorado**.

That same year, the Methodist Sunday School honored Marion and 22 other young men who had enlisted, all former members of a class taught by E.C. Bill. A patriotic service and flag drill were held in their honor.

By **January 1918**, Marion was stationed at **Ft. Bliss, Texas**, with the 14th Field Artillery. Later that year, he transferred to **Camp Green in Charlotte, North Carolina**, and then deployed to **France**, where he fought in the **Battle of the Argonne Forest**. In a letter dated August 14, 1918, he wrote home:

"Our battery so far has been successful in dodging shells, but were often exposed while hauling shells to the guns. We have been on the front since August 1 and haven't lost a man yet…"

He served courageously in France and with the **Army of Occupation in Germany** after the armistice. Marion returned to the United States aboard the **U.S.S. Zeelandia**, arriving home in **Dodge City on August 14, 1919**, after being honorably discharged at **Camp Dodge, Iowa**.

Civilian Life

After returning from the war, Marion resumed life in Dodge City. He boarded with his parents at **504 Avenue G** and began working as a **switchman for the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway**. He was an active member of both the **Ancient Order of United Workmen (A.O.U.W.)** and the **Brotherhood of Switchmen**.

Tragic Death

Marion's life was tragically cut short on **July 29, 1920**, at the age of 24. While attempting to step onto the back of a moving switch engine during the early hours of the morning, he lost his footing and fell beneath the wheels. One of his legs was severed, and the other was severely mangled. Despite the best efforts of doctors at McCarty Hospital, Marion died that morning at **8:30 a.m.**

The *Dodge City Journal* reported:

"He remained unconscious almost to the time of his death… He was well known here, having lived practically his entire life in the community… quiet, reserved and had a host of friends in Dodge City."

Family

Marion was survived by his parents, **Mr. and Mrs. J. F. Crawford**, four sisters — **Bernice Allen** of Cimarron, **Helen (Mrs. Russell) Horton** of Dodge City, **Esther Crawford**, and **Lois Crawford** — and two brothers, **Leon Crawford** and **Hugh Crawford**. His **grandmother, Mary Crawford**, and **uncle, Nelson Crawford**, also lived in Dodge City.

Burial

He was laid to rest in **Maple Grove Cemetery** in Dodge City, Kansas.

Historical Context

Marion's short but eventful life was deeply shaped by the dramatic events of the early 20th century. Born in the closing years of the 19th century, he came of age during a time of significant national transformation — a growing industrial economy, rapid technological progress, and escalating global conflict.

Like many young men of his generation, Marion answered the call when America joined World War I in 1917. He served on the Western Front during one of the war's most grueling battles — the Meuse-Argonne Offensive — and participated in the occupation of Germany afterward. His service and sacrifice reflect the sense of duty and patriotism that defined the "Doughboy" generation.

Returning home, Marion joined the ranks of working-class veterans rebuilding civilian life. His job with the railroad was typical of many returning servicemen, contributing to America's growing infrastructure. Sadly, like others in high-risk jobs, he fell victim to a tragic workplace accident just one year after his homecoming.

Marion's story reminds us of the valor, hardship, and fragility of young lives shaped by war and labor. His memory is preserved not only through records and obituaries but in the lives of his family and the community he served.

"The Ballad of Marion Crawford"
(Verse-chorus structure)

Verse 1
In a Kansas town where the prairie winds blow,
A baby was born in the late autumn glow.
Marion Crawford, a quiet young soul,
Grew up with dreams and a kind-hearted role.

Verse 2
He answered the call when the world went to war,
Left Dodge City for a far distant shore.
Through Argonne's dark forest, through fire and rain,
He hauled shells to the line, through struggle and strain.

Chorus
🎶 Oh Marion, brave and true,
Wore the uniform of red, white, and blue.
Came home with hope and hands worn strong,
But his journey on earth wasn't long.
We still remember, we still sing—
The ballad of a soldier, a son, and the spring. 🎶

Verse 3

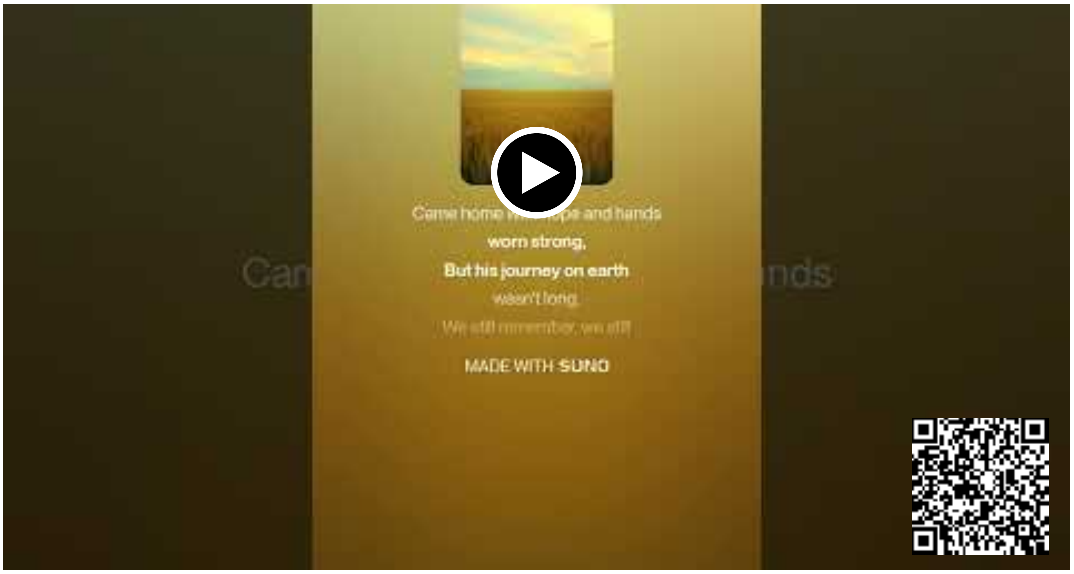
He found work on the rails, a switchman by trade,
Where steel met the earth and the loud engines played.
But fate can be cruel in the still of the night,
He slipped from the steps and was lost to the fight.

Chorus
🎶 Oh Marion, brave and true,
Wore the uniform of red, white, and blue.
Came home with hope and hands worn strong,
But his journey on earth wasn't long.
We still remember, we still sing—
The ballad of a soldier, a son, and the spring. 🎶

Bridge
He lies beneath Dodge's skies so wide,
With brothers and sisters and kin by his side.
A hero not for medals or fame,
But for living with courage, and carrying the flame.

Final Chorus
🎶 Oh Marion, brave and true,
Wore the uniform of red, white, and blue.
He gave what he had, he stood so tall,
A life full of love, though fate made it small.
We still remember, we still sing—
The ballad of Marion, our soldier with wings. 🎶

https://youtube.com/watch?v=OIJ_JuHHDBM



Transcribing Cursive

By Marcia Crawford Philbrick
May 22, 2025
Artificial Intelligence
https://heartlandgenealogy.org/2025/05/22/transcribing-cursive/

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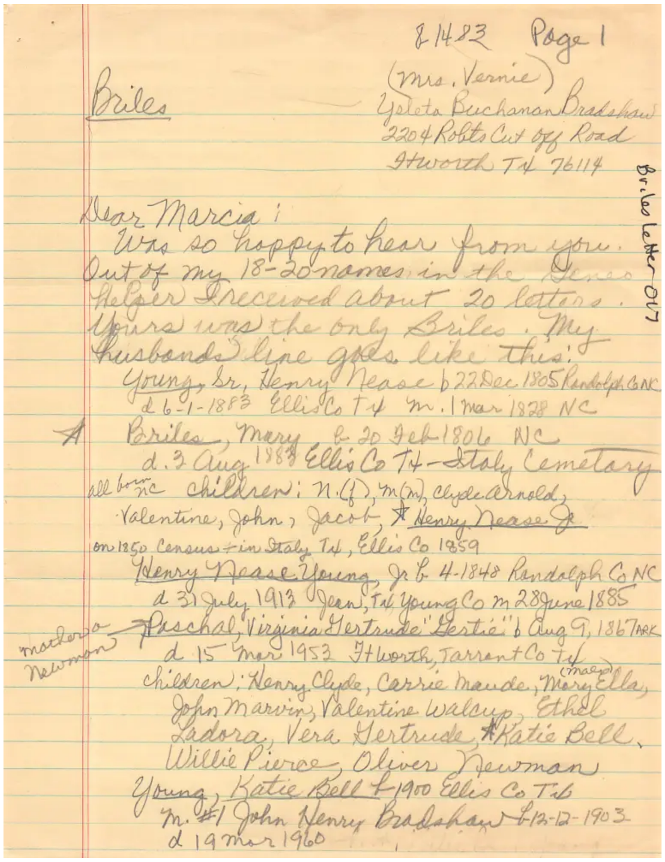
AI
HEARTLANDGENEALOGY

While FamilySearch's experimental lab showcases how AI can transcribe cursive handwriting, I had never tried it myself. Since I have several handwritten letters I'd like to feature in blog posts, I decided to test ChatGPT's transcription abilities.

I started by asking whether it could transcribe cursive. It responded:

Yes, I can transcribe cursive handwriting from images, as long as the writing is reasonably legible. Please upload the image you'd like transcribed, and I'll do my best to provide an accurate transcription.

Next, I uploaded the image of the following letter and asked for a transcription.



8 14 83 Page 1

Briles

(Mrs. Vernie)
Yeleta Buchanan Bradshaw
2204 Robts Cut off Road
Ftworth TX 76114

Briles Letter 017

Dear Marcia:
Was so happy to hear from you. Out of my 18-20 names in the Genes Helper I received about 20 letters. Yours was the only Briles. My husband's line goes like this:

Young, Sr, Henry Nease b 22 Dec 1805 Randolph Co NC
d 6-1-1883 Ellis Co TX m. 1 Mar 1828 NC

A Briles, Mary b 20 Feb 1806 NC
d. 3 Aug 1888 Ellis Co TX – Italy Cemetary

all born NC children: N.(f), M(m), Clyde Arnold,
Valentine, John, Jacob, *Henry Nease Jr
on 1850 Census + in Italy TX, Ellis Co 1859

Henry Nease Young, Jr b 4-1848 Randolph Co NC
d 31 July 1913 Jean, TX Young Co m 28 June 1885

mother of Newman Paschal, Virginia Gertrude "Gertie" b Aug 9, 1867 ARK
d 15 Mar 1953 Ftworth, Tarrant Co TX
children: Henry Clyde, Carrie Maude, Mary (Mae) Ella, John Marvin, Valentine Walcup, Ethel Ladora, Vera Gertrude, *Katie Bell, Willie Pierce, Oliver Newman

Young, Katie Bell b 1900 Ellis Co TX
m. #1 John Henry Bradshaw b 12-12-1903
d 19 Mar 1960

8-14-83
Page 1

Briles

(Mrs. Vernie)
Yeleta Buchanan Bradshaw
2204 Rolls Court off. Road
Ft. Worth TX 76114

Briles Line on?

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d. 6-9-1883 Ellis Co TX m. 1 Mar 1828 NC

Briles, Mary b. 20 Feb 1806 NC
d. 3 Aug 1884 Ellis Co TX – Italy Cemetery

all born
Children: N(f), m(m), also Arnold
Valentine, John, Jacob *Henry Nease Jr.
(on 1850 Census in Italy, TX, Ellis Co. 1859)

Henry Nease Young Jr. b. 4-1-1845 Randolph Co NC
d. 3 July 1913 Jean, TX Young Co m. 28 June 1885

Paschal, Virginia Gertrude “Gertie” Aug 1, 1867 – TX
d. 15 Mar 1953 Ft. Worth, Tarrant Co TX

Children: Henry Clyde, Carrie Maude, Mozelle,
John Marvin, Valentine Wallace, Ethel,
Ladora, Vera Gertrude *Katie Bell
Willie Pierce, Oliver **Newman**

Young, Katie Bell b. 1900 Ellis Co TX
m. (1st) John Henry Bradshaw b. 12-12-1903
d. 19 Mar 1960

So, how well did ChatGPT do? Below is the transcription it produced, with any errors struck through and the corrected text following in *italics*. I initially attempted to use **bold** for the corrections, but since some of the original transcription already included bold text, that approach proved a bit confusing. After comparing the original letter to the transcription closely, I realized that ChatGPT interpreted the underlined portions of the letter as bold text.

8-14-83
Page 1

Briles

(Mrs. Vernie)
Yeleta Buchanan Bradshaw
2204 Rolls Court off. Road
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Briles ~~Line on?~~ ***Letter.017***

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all born ***NC***
Children: N(f), m(m), ~~also~~ ***Clyde*** Arnold
Valentine, John, Jacob ~~*~~ **& Henry Nease Jr.**
(on 1850 Census in Italy, TX, Ellis Co. 1859) – ***no parenthesis around this statement in original***

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Paschal, Virginia Gertrude “Gertie” Aug 1, 1867 – ~~TX~~ ***ARK***
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Note in column next to Paschal, Virginia that was not transcribed: ***mother a Newman***

Children: Henry Clyde, Carrie Maude, ~~Mozelle,~~ ***Mary Ella (Mae)***
John Marvin, Valentine Wallace, Ethel,
Ladora, Vera Gertrude *Katie Bell
Willie Pierce, Oliver **Newman** – *(Newman transcribed in bold when original was not bold)*

Young, Katie Bell b. 1900 Ellis Co TX

m.~~ (1st)~~ #1John Henry Bradshaw b. 12-12-1903
d. 19 Mar 1960

While I still needed to carefully compare the original letter to the transcription for accuracy, using ChatGPT made the process significantly faster and more efficient. Thanks, ChatGPT!

Curious about what AI can do for your genealogy research? Try uploading a handwritten letter to ChatGPT or another transcription tool and see what it reveals!

Friday Find: Senior Citizen

By Marcia Crawford Philbrick
May 23, 2025
Mentzer
https://heartlandgenealogy.org/2025/05/23/friday-find-senior-citizen/

FRIDAY FINDS
FRIDAY FINDS
HEARTLAND GENEALOGY BLOG

Family History in the News: The Clara Mentzer Williams Clipping

Do you have newspaper clippings tucked away in your family files? If so, some of them might offer more than just announcements — they can provide rich histories of the families they feature. I recently rediscovered such a clipping in my collection. While the article focuses on Clara Mentzer Williams, it also preserves a valuable history of the Mentzer family in Woodson County, Kansas.

OUR SENIOR CITIZENS

Our Senior Citizen this week is Mrs. Clara E. Williams, who is living on the farm on which she was born 85 years ago.

In the year 1870, George and Emeline Mentzer came to Woodson County from Kewanee, Illinois. Mentzer had served with the 24th Massachusetts Infantry throughout the Civil War. Sometime after the war's end, he decided to head west. He, his wife, and their small sons, Charley O. and Fred, arrived at Neosho Falls in the spring of 1871.

While Mrs. Mentzer and the boys stayed temporarily at the Falls House, George Mentzer and a friend, Geo. W. Allen, purchased raw claims from the M.K.T. Railway along West Owl Creek, three miles west and one and a half miles north of present-day Yates Center. After building a small cabin, Mentzer brought his family to settle on the 160-acre claim.

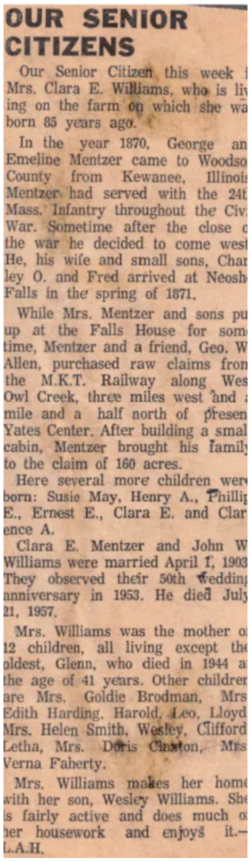
Several more children were born on the homestead: Susie May, Henry A., Phillip E., Ernest E., Clara E., and Clarence A.

Clara E. Mentzer later married John W. Williams on April 1, 1903. They celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in 1953. John W. Williams passed away on July 21, 1957.

Mrs. Williams was the mother of 12 children, all living except the eldest, Glenn, who died in 1944 at the age of 41. Her surviving children included Mrs. Goldie Brodman, Mrs. Edith Harding, Harold, Leo, Lloyd, Mrs. Helen Smith, Wesley, Clifford, Letha, Mrs. Doris Claxton, and Mrs. Verna Faherty.

Today, Mrs. Williams makes her home with her son, Wesley Williams. She remains fairly active and still enjoys doing much of her own housework.

(by L.A.H.)



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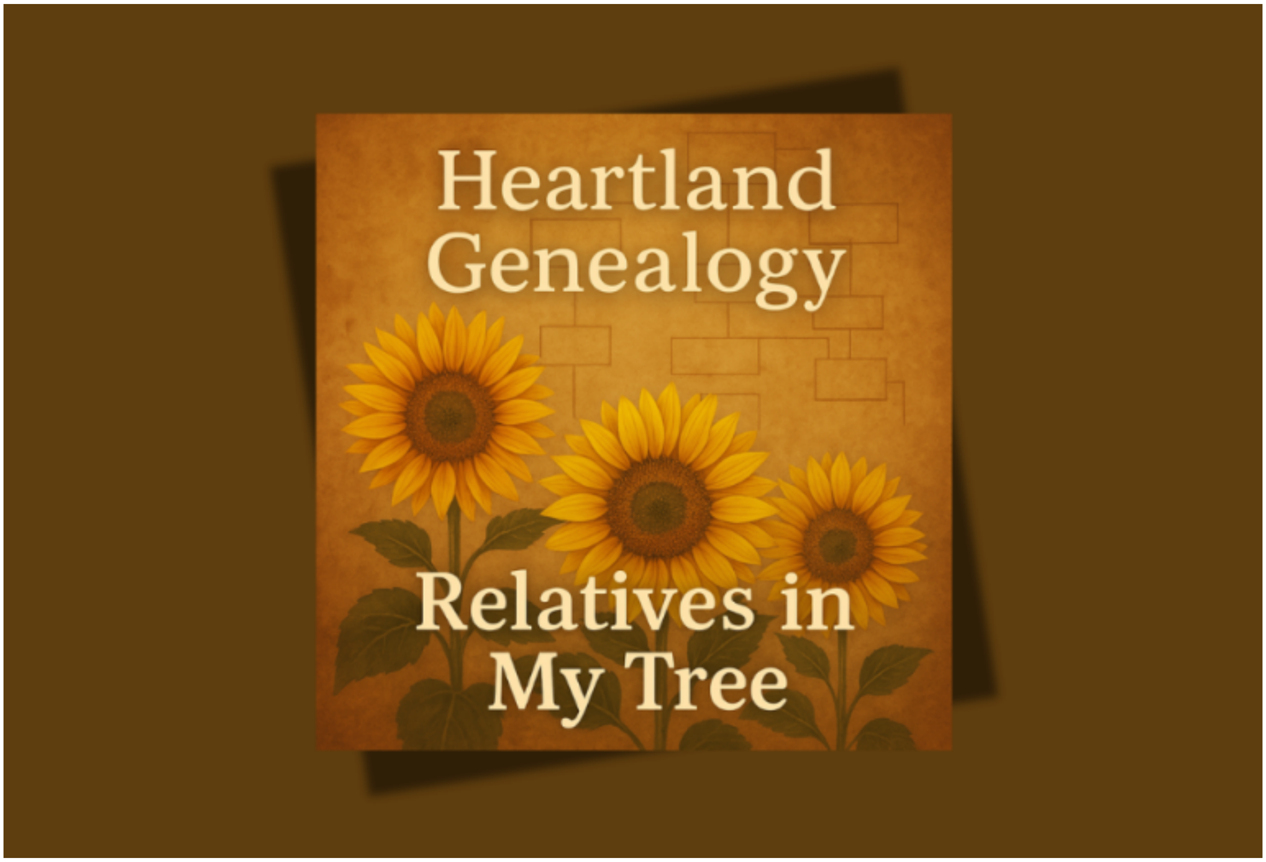
L.A.H.

Since the Woodson County newspapers from this period have not yet been digitized, finding this article today would have required reading through years of microfilm. I'm incredibly grateful that my grandmother chose to save clippings like this, preserving pieces of our family's past that would otherwise be difficult to recover.

ABC: Helen Marjorie Crawford Horton

By Marcia Crawford Philbrick
May 24, 2025
Crawford
https://heartlandgenealogy.org/2025/05/24/abc-helen-marjorie-crawford-horton/



Helen Marjorie Crawford Horton (1900–1971)

Early Life and Family

Helen Marjorie Crawford was born on April 30, 1900, in Dodge City, Kansas, to Judson Foster Crawford and Josie Winifred Hammond Crawford. Her arrival made headlines in the local papers, with *The Dodge City Reporter* announcing, “A twelve-pound girl arrived at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Judd Crawford last Monday morning. All doing well.”

Helen grew up in Dodge City, living at 4th Avenue as a baby and later at other homes in town. She was listed in the 1900, 1905, 1910, and 1915 census records as part of the Crawford household. In 1916, she was a freshman at Dodge City High School, marking the beginning of a life rooted in education and community.

Marriage and Children

On July 16, 1919, at the age of 19, Helen married Russel Clifton Horton in Dodge City. Russel, recently discharged from military service in World War I, was employed by the Santa Fe Railroad at the time. The couple made their home in Dodge City, where they raised their family and became well-known members of the community.

Helen and Russel had three children:

- **Russel Clifton Horton Jr.**, born October 13, 1920
- **Marjorie Louise Horton**, born January 11, 1923
- **Elaine Marilyn Horton**, born July 1, 1926

Helen managed a busy household while Russel pursued a career that included work as a railroad machinist, post office mail carrier, and military service during World War II.

Later Years and Moves

The Horton family remained in Dodge City for many years. Census records from 1920, 1930, and 1940 show them living at various addresses in the city. During the mid-1940s, Helen and Russel relocated to San Angelo, Texas, and later to Gila Bend, Arizona.

After Russel's death in 1958, Helen eventually moved to El Paso, Texas, where she lived for the last twelve years of her life. She remained close to her children and grandchildren during these years.

Death and Legacy

Helen Marjorie Crawford Horton died on November 1, 1971, in El Paso at the age of 71. Her obituary appeared in both the *El Paso Times* and the *Dodge City Daily Globe*, which described her as a longtime resident of Dodge City and a woman who was dearly missed by her children and extended family.

She was buried beside her husband at Fort Bliss National Cemetery in El Paso. Survivors included her son, Russel Jr.; daughter, Elaine Wells of El Paso; two brothers, Leon Crawford of Dodge City and Hugh Crawford of Flagstaff, Arizona; and two sisters, Lois Maden of Pueblo, Colorado, and Mrs. Carl Noll of Taos, New Mexico. She also left behind eight grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

Children and Their Families

- **Russel Clifton Horton Jr.** served in the U.S. Army during World War II, reaching the rank of Master Sergeant. He married Eileen Avenelle Jones in 1941. They raised a family in Dodge City and remained active in the community. Russel Jr. died in 2006 and is buried at Maple Grove Cemetery in Dodge City.
- **Marjorie Louise Horton** married James Kenneth Brock in 1940 and later married a man named Machado. She died young in 1953 in Phoenix, Arizona, and was buried at Maple Grove Cemetery in Dodge City.
- **Elaine Marilyn Horton** married George Alton Wells in 1946 at Sheppard Field in Texas. The couple made their home in El Paso, where they raised a family. Elaine passed away in 2008 and was buried at Restlawn Memorial Park in El Paso.

Historical Context

Helen’s life spanned some of the most transformative decades in American history. Born at the dawn of the 20th century, she lived through two World Wars, the Great Depression, the Dust Bowl years in Kansas, and the rapid societal changes of the postwar era. Her husband and son both served their country in times of war, and her family remained rooted in civic duty and service.

Helen’s story is a reminder of the quiet strength of women who held families together during times of war, relocation, and change. Her legacy lives on through her descendants and the stories they continue to share.

The above biography was created by ChatGPT from a genealogy narrative report about Helen Crawford Horton.

Check out Helen Crawford’s profiles on

- Ancestry: Heartland Genealogy tree
- FamilySearch – KC9F-NNJ
- WikiTree – Crawford-8399

Saturday Night Genealogy Fun

By Marcia Crawford Philbrick
May 25, 2025
SaturdayNightGenealogyFun
https://heartlandgenealogy.org/2025/05/25/saturday-night-genealogy-fun-157/

Calling all Genea-Musings Fans:

It's Saturday Night again –

Time for some more Genealogy Fun!!

Your mission, should you decide to accept it (cue the Mission Impossible! music) is to:

1) Did one of your ancestors make a momentous life decision but you don't know how you can tell the story beyond the bare facts? Who, what, when, where and how?

2) This week's challenge is to ask an artificial intelligence tool to create a realistic family story that might help you understand your ancestor's life decision and his/her experiences.

My third great grandfather, William G. Harding's grandfather, William Harding, was living in New York state at the start of the revolutionary war. According to family lore, William became a loyalist when neighbors mistreated his sister-in-law because her husband was missing and believed to be aiding the British in New York City. Thus, William, his wife, Leah (Gillies) along with William's sister-in-law and all of the children left everything behind as they traveled by foot from around Orange county to New York city. By 1787 William and Leah had settled in a Loyalist community in New Brunswick.

The 1851 census for Kings county, New Brunswick shows WIlliam G. Harding as a 47 year old widower with seven children: Caroline, Abel, Thomas, Abijah, Julia, Isabella and Henry.

In 1860, Wm G Harding was listed on the Black Hawk county, Iowa census as a 54 year old farmer who was born in New Brunswick. Sons Thomas and Henry were living in the household. Family lore indicates the family lived in Racine Wisconsin prior to settlng in Iowa. An 1858 city directory for Racine does list a William G. Harding.

At this point, little is known about the family between the 1851 New Brunswick census and the 1860 Iowa census.

AI Prompt: Using the above information please draft a narrative to explain how William G. Harding might have migrated from New Brunswick to Iowa between 1851 and 1860. Please provide details about each mode of transportation, names of towns they likely departed from and towns they likely arrived in, the length of each segment of travel and any hardships the family likely faced making this move. Also include a section providing possible reasons for the move.

> Certainly! Below is a **narrative-style migration story** that blends known facts about your ancestor **William G. Harding** with historically plausible travel routes, transportation methods, hardships, and motivations for relocating from **New Brunswick to Iowa between 1851 and 1860**.
>
> ---
>
> ### From Loyalist Roots to the American Prairie: The Migration of William G. Harding (1851–1860)
>
> In 1851, William G. Harding was a 47-year-old widower living in **Kings County, New Brunswick**, Canada. The census shows him caring for seven children: **Caroline, Abel, Thomas, Abijah, Julia, Isabella**, and **Henry**. He was the grandson of **William Harding**, a Loyalist who fled Orange County, New York during the Revolutionary War, abandoning everything to resettle in New Brunswick. That legacy of movement and perseverance would repeat itself in the next generation.

Sometime between 1851 and 1860, William G. Harding and at least some of his children migrated from the coastal woodlands of **New Brunswick** to the tallgrass prairies of **Black Hawk County, Iowa**—a journey of more than **1,500 miles** through multiple regions, modes of transport, and national boundaries. By 1860, William appeared in the U.S. federal census as a 54-year-old farmer in Iowa, with sons **Thomas and Henry** still in his household.

Likely Route and Modes of Transportation

While records of the family's exact journey remain scarce, their migration likely followed a common pattern among eastern Canadians and New Englanders who moved westward in the mid-19th century. The trip would have been a complex multi-stage migration involving land, rail, and water travel.

Stage 1: Departing New Brunswick (ca. 1852–1853)

- **Origin:** Near **Kingston Parish**, Kings County, New Brunswick
- **Destination: Saint John**, a major port city on the Bay of Fundy
- **Distance:** ~40–60 miles
- **Mode:** Wagon or horse-drawn cart; possibly on foot
- **Duration:** 3–5 days
- **Hardships:** Muddy roads, unpredictable weather, and limited accommodations.

From their rural home, William and his children would have traveled by wagon or on foot to **Saint John**, New Brunswick's largest city. Here, they likely sold off or packed what few belongings they could carry.

Stage 2: Coastal Voyage to New England (ca. 1853)

- **Route:** Saint John to **Boston, Massachusetts** or **Portland, Maine**
- **Distance:** ~250–300 miles by sea
- **Mode:** Coastal schooner or steam packet
- **Duration:** 3–5 days, depending on weather and ship schedules
- **Hardships:** Seasickness, cramped conditions, and the threat of stormy waters in the Bay of Fundy and Gulf of Maine.

These coastal steamers were common for Loyalist descendants heading south in search of opportunity. Boston and Portland both had rail connections that could take the family westward.

Stage 3: East to Midwest by Train (ca. 1853–1854)

- **Route:** Boston/Portland → **Albany** → **Buffalo** → **Detroit** → **Chicago**
- **Distance:** ~1,000 miles
- **Mode:** Railroad
- **Duration:** 1–2 weeks with layovers
- **Hardships:** Costly fares, long layovers, coal dust, noisy travel, and limited sanitation.

By the early 1850s, a traveler could move by rail from the Northeast to the Midwest via a patchwork of expanding railroads. The **Erie Canal** may have been used briefly between **Albany and Buffalo** if rail links were not complete or affordable.

Stage 4: Temporary Residence in Racine, Wisconsin (ca. 1855–1858)

An 1858 **Racine city directory** lists a William G. Harding, and family tradition holds they lived here for a time.

- **Why Racine?** It was a booming port and manufacturing hub on Lake Michigan, attracting New Englanders and Canadians alike.

- **Likely Activities:** Laboring jobs, possibly in carpentry or shipping; education for children; connecting with other settlers from the Northeast.

This temporary stop may have been intended to earn money or test opportunities before continuing westward.

Stage 5: Final Move to Black Hawk County, Iowa (ca. 1858–1860)

- **Route:** Racine → **Galena, Illinois** or **Dubuque, Iowa** via steamship
- Then westward across the prairie by **wagon or rail spur** to **Black Hawk County**
- **Distance:** ~300 miles
- **Duration:** 1–2 weeks
- **Hardships:** Prairie weather, spring mud, illness, mechanical breakdowns.

By 1860, William was firmly settled in Iowa, farming with sons **Thomas** and **Henry**.

Possible Reasons for the Move

Several factors likely motivated William G. Harding to uproot his family from New Brunswick:

- **Land Opportunities:** Iowa offered **cheap or free farmland** under the Preemption Act and later the Homestead Act (1862). For a widower with growing sons, this was an appealing path to economic security.
- **Limited Prospects in New Brunswick:** Overpopulation in Loyalist settlements and limited arable land made it difficult for second and third generations to thrive.
- **Family and Community Networks:** Other Loyalist descendants from New Brunswick and New England were moving to the Midwest, offering a network of support.
- **Transportation Improvements:** Railroads and steamships made westward migration faster and somewhat safer by the 1850s.

Conclusion

The journey of William G. Harding from New Brunswick to Iowa mirrors that of thousands of 19th-century North American families—defined by resilience, faith in the future, and the pursuit of land and stability. Though the specifics may be lost to history, the arc of his migration paints a vivid portrait of frontier determination, and the continuation of a family story that began in Loyalist exile and took root in the American heartland.

Surprised about the overland route, I asked ChatGPT to redo the task.

> Can you write a similar narrative that utilizes travel over the great lakes from New Brunswick to Wisconsin?
>
> Below is the response to this second prompt.
>
> Certainly! Below is a revised migration narrative for **William G. Harding**, focusing on a historically plausible route that makes use of **Great Lakes travel**—a common path for mid-19th century migrants from Canada's Atlantic provinces to the American Midwest.

Across the Great Lakes: William G. Harding's Journey from New Brunswick to Wisconsin (1851–1860)

In 1851, **William G. Harding**, a 47-year-old widower, was raising seven children in **Kings County, New Brunswick**. The census listed his children as **Caroline, Abel, Thomas, Abijah, Julia, Isabella**, and **Henry**.

William had deep Loyalist roots—his grandfather, **William Harding**, had fled to New Brunswick from Orange County, New York during the Revolutionary War. Now, decades later, William G. Harding would once again uproot his family in search of new opportunities—this time moving westward toward **Wisconsin** and eventually **Iowa**.

By 1860, William appears in the **Black Hawk County, Iowa census** with two of his sons, Thomas and Henry. In the gap between those years, family lore places the Hardings in **Racine, Wisconsin**, and indeed, an 1858 city directory confirms the presence of a **William G. Harding** in that city.

So how did a farming family from coastal New Brunswick make the long journey to the Great Lakes frontier? The most likely answer: a multi-stage migration that utilized **maritime shipping routes** through the **St. Lawrence River** and across the **Great Lakes**.

A Likely Route West by Water and Rail

Stage 1: Departure from Kings County to Saint John, New Brunswick

- **Distance:** 40–60 miles
- **Mode:** Wagon or cart
- **Duration:** 3–4 days
- **Hardships:** Spring mud, rough roads, and limited resources.

Leaving their rural community, the Harding family would travel southward to **Saint John**, New Brunswick's largest seaport. There, they likely sold off possessions, purchased passage, and joined other emigrants headed west.

Stage 2: Saint John to Quebec via Coastal and River Vessel

- **Route:** Coastal steamer up the Bay of Fundy, around the tip of Nova Scotia, and into the **St. Lawrence River**, arriving at **Quebec City**
- **Distance:** ~700 nautical miles
- **Mode:** Steamship or sailing vessel
- **Duration:** 5–10 days, depending on weather
- **Hardships:** Seasickness, cold Atlantic conditions, limited privacy, and exposure to illness.

This was the standard outbound route for many Maritime families heading toward central Canada or the U.S. Midwest.

Stage 3: Quebec to Montreal by River Steamer

- **Distance:** ~160 miles
- **Mode:** St. Lawrence River steamer
- **Duration:** 2–3 days
- **Stops:** Likely at **Trois-Rivières** and other river towns
- **Hardships:** Crowded decks and port delays.

Once in **Montreal**, the family would connect with a rapidly developing transport system linking Canada to the American frontier.

Stage 4: Montreal to Kingston to Toronto to Georgian Bay (Lake Ontario travel)

- **Route:** Montreal → Kingston → Toronto → Collingwood or Owen Sound
- **Distance:** ~400 miles
- **Mode:** Lake Ontario steamer, then overland or rail to Lake Huron

- **Duration:** 4–6 days total
- **Hardships:** Storms, mechanical delays, and logistical complexities with children in tow.

Toronto served as a key launching point for westward travel into the interior via the **Great Lakes network**.

Stage 5: Across the Great Lakes to Racine, Wisconsin

- **Route:** Lake Huron → Lake Michigan → **Racine, WI**
- **Possible Ports of Call: Sarnia**, **Mackinac Island**, **Milwaukee**
- **Distance:** ~500–600 miles by water
- **Mode:** Steamship
- **Duration:** 4–7 days
- **Hardships:** Exposure to early/late-season storms, rationed meals, risk of disease on board.

By the 1850s, steamships frequently ran from **Georgian Bay** across Lakes Huron and Michigan to key Midwestern ports, including **Chicago**, **Milwaukee**, and **Racine**.

Temporary Residence in Racine (ca. 1855–1859)

Records indicate William G. Harding lived in **Racine** by 1858. This city on the western shore of Lake Michigan was booming with immigrants and manufacturing jobs. It would have offered temporary work, schooling for children, and contact with other New Englanders and Loyalist descendants.

Final Leg: Racine to Black Hawk County, Iowa (ca. 1859–1860)

- **Route:** Overland by wagon or rail to **Dubuque**, then west to **Waterloo or Cedar Falls**
- **Distance:** ~250 miles
- **Mode:** Wagon, rail, or riverboat on the Mississippi
- **Duration:** 1–2 weeks
- **Hardships:** Spring flooding, limited waystations, and unpredictable prairie weather.

By the time of the 1860 census, William had transitioned from maritime traveler to prairie farmer. He was living in Iowa with his sons Thomas and Henry, starting over once again.

Possible Motivations for the Move

- **Land Opportunities:** Iowa's rich farmland and land incentives were major draws.
- **Economic Hardship in New Brunswick:** Overcrowding and lack of opportunity in Loyalist settlements pushed families westward.
- **Family Advancement:** William's children were reaching adulthood—new land offered a future for the next generation.
- **Chain Migration:** Other Maritimers and former Loyalist families were making the same move to Wisconsin and Iowa.
- **Transportation Improvements:** The rise of steam travel and improved navigation through the St. Lawrence and Great Lakes made the Midwest more accessible.

Conclusion

Though no journal or passenger list survives to confirm each step, the migration of **William G. Harding** from **New Brunswick to Iowa** likely followed the natural arteries of 19th-century movement: the rivers and lakes that connected the old world to the new frontier. His journey through the **St. Lawrence River**, the **Great**

> **Lakes**, and into the heart of the **American Midwest** echoes the path of countless Loyalist descendants who traded the rocky Atlantic coasts for prairie winds and promise.

Both responses are plausible. Since other members of the family are also living in Racine, Wisconsin, my theory is that they traveled across the Great Lakes. Using that route, I asked ChatGPT about the cost of the trip and got the following response.

Estimated Cost of the Harding Family's Journey via the Great Lakes (ca. 1853–1858)

Traveling from **Kings County, New Brunswick** to **Racine, Wisconsin**, William G. Harding and his seven children likely followed a common route used by many Maritime families. Based on mid-19th-century transportation costs, here's an estimate of the expenses for the journey:

Travel Segment	Mode	Distance	Est. Cost per Person	Family Total (8 people)
Kings County to Saint John, NB	Wagon or cart hire	~50 mi	~$0.50	**$4.00**
Saint John to Quebec (coastal steamer)	Steamship	~700 mi	$5.00 adult, $3.00 child	**$28.00**
Quebec to Montreal (river steamer)	Steamboat	~160 mi	$1.50 adult, $1.00 child	**$10.00**
Montreal to Toronto (steamer + rail)	Lake Ontario + train	~400 mi	$3.00 adult, $2.00 child	**$20.00**
Toronto to Racine via Great Lakes	Steamship	~600 mi	$6.00 adult, $4.00 child	**$38.00**
Meals & lodging en route (approx. 3–4 weeks)	Inns, ship meals	–	~$0.25/day/person	**$42.00**

🟡 **Total Estimated Cost (in 1850s dollars): ~$142.00**

$ What Would That Be Today?

Using historical inflation estimates, **$142 in the 1850s** equals approximately **$5,300 to $5,800 in today's currency**.

Conclusion

This exercise in using artificial intelligence to craft a historically plausible migration story gave me new perspective on the life of my 3rd great-grandfather, **William G. Harding**. While the details of his journey from **New Brunswick to Iowa** may never be fully documented, combining family lore, historical records, and period-accurate travel routes helped me better imagine the motivations, hardships, and resilience behind his move.

By asking AI to fill in the narrative gaps with realistic possibilities grounded in historical context, I gained not only a deeper appreciation for my ancestor's life choices—but also a renewed understanding of how to blend research and storytelling in family history.

If you haven't tried using an AI tool to explore your ancestor's world, I encourage you to take this week's challenge. You may be surprised at the insights—and empathy—it can spark.

Memorial Day – Finding Tributes to Veterans

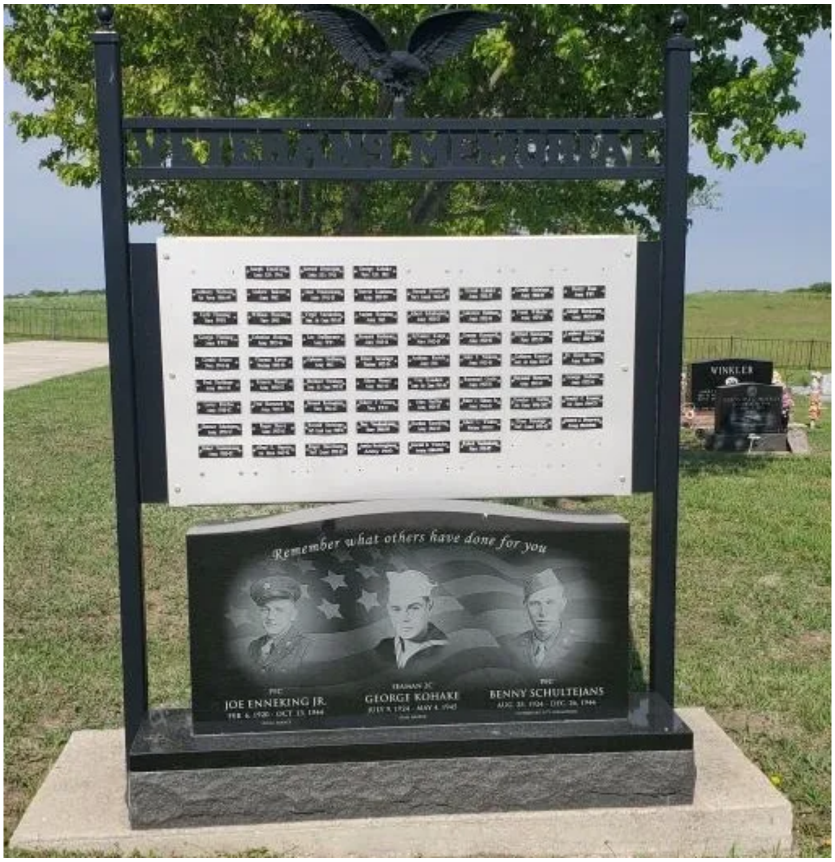
By Marcia Crawford Philbrick
May 26, 2025
Uncategorized
https://heartlandgenealogy.org/2025/05/26/memorial-day-finding-tributes-to-veterans/

MEMORIAL DAY

My grandmother often called today "Decoration Day"—and that's exactly how we spent those mornings: decorating graves. As you walk through cemeteries, have you noticed the ways in which military veterans are honored? Many have an "Avenue of Flags" proudly lining the entrance, but some offer additional tributes within their grounds.

I volunteer with the Nemaha County Historical Society, and we were recently asked to contribute information about local veteran memorials to a site maintained by the American Legion. The request encouraged us to include not only the military wall in Seneca, but also a tribute located in a rural cemetery.

Adding the military wall, the military museum, and the courthouse memorials in Seneca was straightforward. With the help of another volunteer, we also submitted information for the memorial in St. Bede's Cemetery (Kelly, Kansas).


VETERANS MEMORIAL
WINKLER
Remember what others have done for you
PFC
JOE ENNEKING JR.
FEB. 6, 1920 - OCT. 15, 1944
SEAMAN 2C
GEORGE KOHAKE
JULY 9, 1924 - MAY 4, 1945
PFC
BENNY SCHULTEJANS
AUG. 20, 1924 - DEC. 26, 1944

Once we had documented that cemetery tribute, we began looking for others—and so far, we've identified four memorials in local cemeteries. As we continue visiting cemeteries this Decoration Day, we hope to discover and document even more.

Have you seen a veteran memorial in a local cemetery?
Help honor and preserve these tributes by posting them to the American Legion's memorial registry site. Whether it's a plaque, memorial board, or monument, your contribution ensures these sacrifices are remembered and shared with a wider audience.

ABC Biography with Endnotes

By Marcia Crawford Philbrick
May 27, 2025
Massachusetts,Revolutionary_War
https://heartlandgenealogy.org/2025/05/27/abc-biography-with-endnotes/

IN CONGRESS July 4, 1776.
The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America
Revolutionary War
AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

I recently shared a post about my Revolutionary War ancestor, Oliver Miles. Inspired by Randy Seaver's ABC (Ancestral Biography Creation) method for using AI to tell our ancestors' stories, I decided to take a fresh look at Oliver's life and see if I could produce a more cohesive narrative.

After doing some additional research and creating event-based notes, I used RootsMagic to generate a narrative report for Oliver Miles, complete with sources. I then turned to ChatGPT with the following prompt:

> *The following is a report with sources about my Revolutionary ancestor, Oliver Miles. Can you turn it into a narrative with sources?*

ChatGPT responded with a well-structured narrative that included numbered references resembling footnotes. At the end of the narrative, it offered a follow-up prompt:

> *Let me know if you'd like a formatted footnote or endnote version of this narrative for publication or blog use.*

Since I wanted a set of properly formatted endnotes for my blog, I replied, *"Yes, please provide the formatted endnotes."* What followed was a clean and complete list of citations, which you'll find below.

Narrative Biography of Oliver Miles (1738–1820)
Revolutionary War Patriot – Concord, Massachusetts

Oliver Miles was born on September 11, 1738, in Concord, Middlesex County, Massachusetts, a town steeped in colonial and revolutionary history.[1] [2]

At the age of 18, he experienced the brutality of war firsthand. On August 17, 1757, during the French and Indian War, Oliver took part in the defense of Fort William Henry. He was wounded in the conflict, taken prisoner, stripped of his clothing, and held captive for three months—an ordeal documented in local histories of Concord.[3] [4]

Around 1761, Oliver married Martha Stone, likely of Framingham, Massachusetts.[18] Martha was the daughter of Joseph Stone and Lydia Parkhurst, and she was born in 1741.[19] Together, Oliver and Martha raised a family in Concord. Among their children was a son, also named Oliver, born on September 27, 1772.[5] [6] [7]

During the Revolutionary War, Oliver Miles served as a private in a Concord company commanded by Lieutenant Ephraim Wheeler under Colonel Eleazer Brooks. On March 4, 1776, his company marched to Roxbury to reinforce the Continental Army positioned near Boston. His recorded service during this call-up lasted six days.[8] [9] In addition to this known service, he also appears on a list titled "Hartwell Brook the first Everidge," and was recorded in a detachment under Colonel Thatcher, although the date of this latter duty is not specified.[8]

That same year, in March 1776, Oliver was named as one of the town's "Hogreaves" during a Concord town meeting. The position of Hogreave was a civic responsibility that involved rounding up free-roaming hogs and ensuring they did not enter the church—a necessary task during the spring and summer months when hogs were permitted to roam the town from April through August. Others appointed alongside Oliver included Simon Blood Jr., Abel Conant, Stephen Barrett, Stephen Jones, Jacob Walker, John Meriam, and Jesse Hosmer.[10]

Oliver continued to live in Concord after the Revolution. He is enumerated there in the 1790 U.S. Census, with a household consisting of two free white males over 16, one male under 16, and four free white females.[11] In 1800, his household included one male 45 or older, one male aged 10–15, one female aged 16–25, and one female 45 or older.[12] By 1810, the household was reduced to just two individuals—Oliver and an adult female, both over 45 years of age.[13]

Oliver Miles passed away on November 3, 1820, in Concord at the age of 82.[1] [14] [15] [16] [17] He was laid to rest in the South Burying Place in Concord, where his headstone still marks his grave.[1]

Martha Stone Miles predeceased him in 1813 at the age of 72.[19]

Endnotes

1. *Find a Grave*, database and images, Find a Grave (www.findagrave.com : viewed 24 April 2025), memorial for Oliver Miles (1738–1820), Memorial no. 24340714.
2. "Massachusetts, Town Birth Records, 1620–1850," Ancestry.com (www.ancestry.com : viewed 24 April 2025), Oliver Miles.
3. Lemuel Shattuck, *History of the Town of Concord* (Boston: Russell, Odiorne and Company, 1835), 72; digitized, Archive.org.
4. *Biographical Sketches of Representative Citizens*, Massachusetts edition (Boston: Graves & Steinbarger, 1901), 341; digitized, Archive.org.
5. "Massachusetts, Town Birth Records, 1620–1850," Ancestry.com (viewed November 2019), Oliver Miles.
6. Jonas Michael Miles, *Miles Genealogy: John Miles of Concord, Massachusetts and His Descendants* (Boston: C.E. Goodspeed & Co., 1920), 12.
7. Massachusetts, Town Clerk, Vital and Town Records, 1626–2001. Film #004934223, FamilySearch.org (viewed 25 April 2025).
8. *Massachusetts, Soldiers and Sailors in the Revolutionary War*, Oliver Miles, 1776; Ancestry.com (viewed 24 April 2025).
9. Massachusetts Society of the Sons of the American Revolution, *Soldiers and Sailors Whose Graves Have Been Designated by the Marker of the Society* (Boston, 1901), 17.
10. Oliver Miles, 1776–1777, p. 10; Concord Massachusetts Public Library, Concord, Massachusetts.
11. 1790 U.S. Census, Middlesex County, MA, Concord, page 158; Ancestry.com (viewed 14 May 2025).
12. 1800 U.S. Census, Middlesex County, MA, Image 9 of 11; Ancestry.com (viewed 24 April 2025).
13. 1810 U.S. Census, Middlesex County, MA, Concord, page 144; Ancestry.com.
14. *Newspaper Extractions from the Northeast, 1704–1930*, *Columbian Centinel*, 22 Nov 1820; Ancestry.com (viewed

25 April 2025).

15. *Massachusetts, Town and Vital Records, 1620–1988*, Oliver Miles, 1820; Ancestry.com.
16. “Massachusetts, Town Death Records, 1620–1850,” Ancestry.com (viewed 24 April 2025), Oliver Miles.
17. Concord 250 History and Education Subcommittee, “Concord 2025 Executive Committee History & Education Subcommittee Report,” May 2024, Town of Concord, MA (https://www.minuteman.media/DocumentCenter/View/48561/2024-05-14-Hist-Ed-Webpage-Info : viewed 14 May 2025), p. 7.
18. *Sons of the American Revolution Membership Applications, 1889–1970*, Charles Hobert Kinsman through Oliver Miles, 1944; Ancestry.com.
19. Ancestry.com, “ThruLines,” Martha Stone – 5th great-grandparent potential (viewed 24 July 2020).

This experience reinforced just how powerful AI can be as a tool for enhancing genealogical storytelling—especially when combined with solid research and thoughtful prompts. By using RootsMagic to organize my findings and ChatGPT to craft the narrative, I was able to create a well-documented, engaging biography of Oliver Miles that I can proudly share with family and fellow researchers.

If you’re experimenting with AI in your own genealogy work, I encourage you to try out Randy Seaver’s ABC method or develop a process that works for you. Whether you’re writing ancestor sketches, creating timelines, or formatting citations, AI can be a helpful partner—when guided by good data and critical thinking.

Have you used AI in your genealogy research? Share your experiences in the comments—I’d love to hear how others are blending technology and family history!

ABC Song and More

By Marcia Crawford Philbrick
May 28, 2025
Massachusetts,Revolutionary_War
https://heartlandgenealogy.org/2025/05/28/abc-song-and-more/

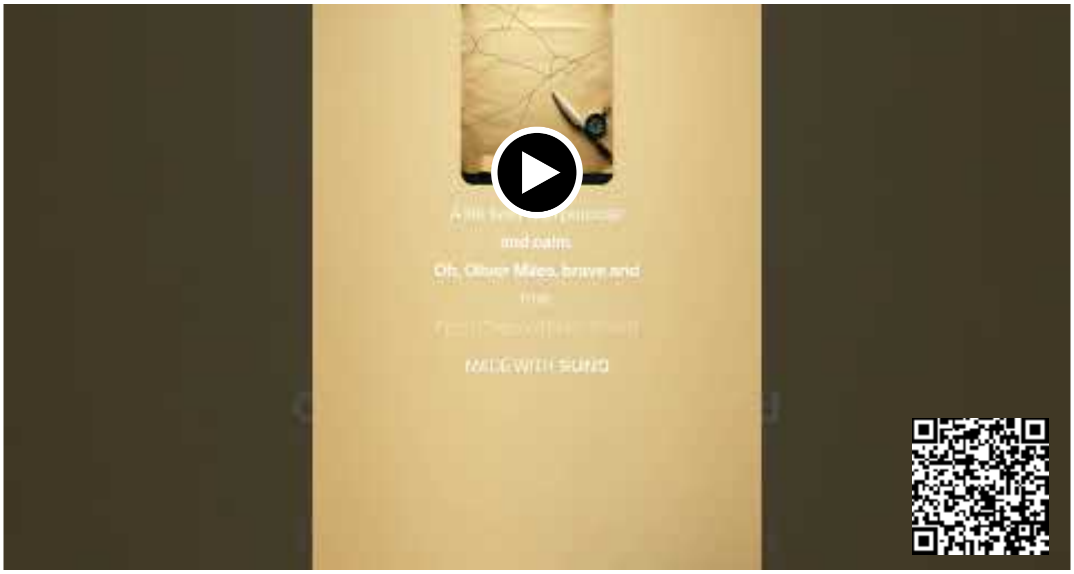
IN CONGRESS July 4, 1776.
The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America
Revolutionary War
AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

Have you been following Randy Seaver's exploration of AI tools in genealogy? If so, have you tried using AI to create a song or generate a research overview about one of your ancestors?

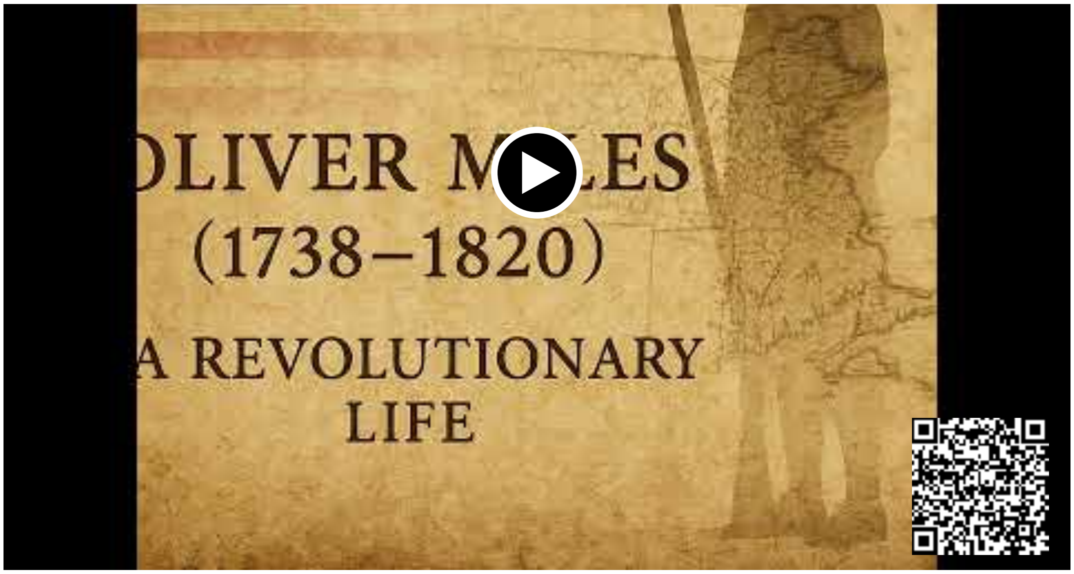
After asking ChatGPT to turn a RootsMagic narrative report into a biography of my Revolutionary War ancestor, Oliver Miles, I decided to go a step further and complete Randy's ABC process by creating both a song and an audio overview.

Using Suno, I created a song and was able to download it as a video file. Then, with Google NotebookLM, I generated a WAV audio overview. I asked ChatGPT to combine that audio with a featured image to create a video. Both videos were uploaded to YouTube, giving me an easy way to share Oliver's story with others.

https://youtube.com/watch?v=E9BrcRi203k


and calm.
Oh, Oliver Miles, brave and true
MADE WITH SUNO

https://youtube.com/watch?v=_5nDnBEUqnE


OLIVER M LES
(1738–1820)
A REVOLUTIONARY LIFE

Telling Oliver Miles’ story through both narrative and song has brought his life and legacy into sharper focus—not just for me, but for anyone who listens. Using AI tools like ChatGPT, Suno, and Google NotebookLM has made it easier than ever to blend research and creativity in ways that resonate with family and community.

If you’re documenting your ancestors’ lives, I encourage you to explore these tools for yourself. Whether you’re crafting a biography, generating a song, or producing a short video, AI can help you share your research in more meaningful and memorable ways.

Have you tried any of these approaches? I’d love to hear how you’re using technology to tell your family’s stories. Leave a comment below or share a link to your own creations!

Telling Her Story: Captain Dorothy Swart Tatum

By Marcia Crawford Philbrick
May 29, 2025
Artificial Intelligence,Nemaha County,World War II
https://heartlandgenealogy.org/2025/05/29/telling-her-story-captain-dorothy-swart-tatum/

HONORING
SERVICE
NEMAHA COUNTY

Thanks to **Genea-Musing's Randy Seaver** and his exploration of AI tools, I've been learning how to use **Google NotebookLM** to enhance my genealogy research.

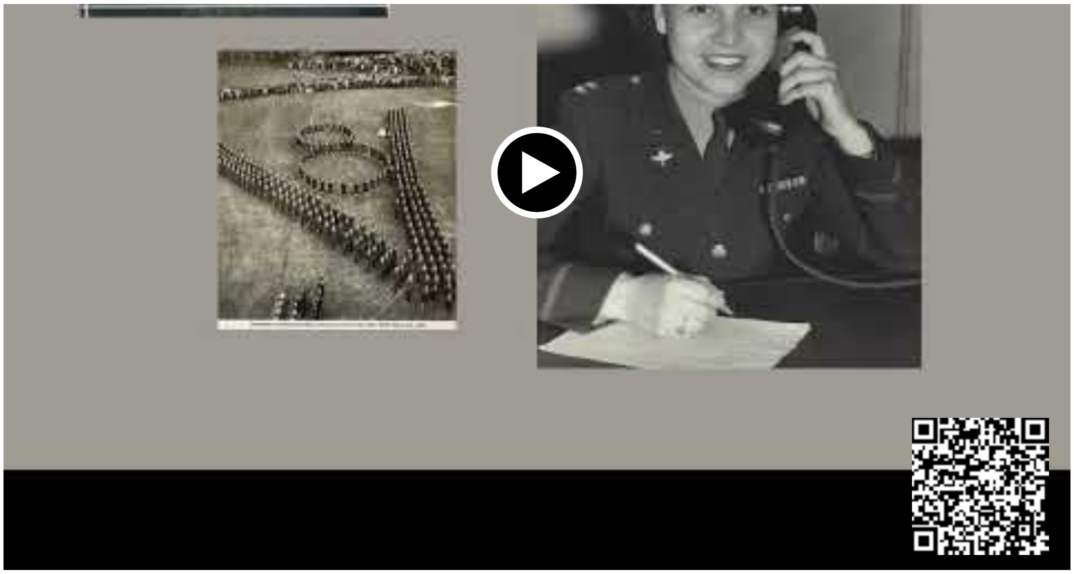
After successfully generating an **audio overview** for one of my Revolutionary War ancestors, **Oliver Miles**, I asked my husband to listen. His immediate reaction was, *"We need to use this technology at the military museum to share the stories of our veterans."*

He had previously researched **Dorothy Swart Tatum**, one of the women honored in our local military collection, and had written her biography for the **Stories Behind the Stars** project. Using that biography, I asked Google Notebook to create a narrated overview of her service.

To make the result easily shareable, I used **Canva** to convert the audio file into a video. That allowed me to upload the story to **YouTube** and present it in a more accessible, engaging format.

Below is the **audio overview**, followed by the **full biography** of Dorothy Swart Tatum.

https://youtube.com/watch?v=-RLbwv8ofoo



Captain Dorothy Lucille Swart Tatum, 28, died 12 February 1946, at Mitchell Field Hospital, Long Island, New York, from illness believed to have been contracted during her service in the Women's Army Corps (WAC) attached to the Eighth Air Force in England. She was the longest serving WAC in the European Theatre of Operations.

Early Life

Dorothy Lucille Swart, the first daughter of George Martin and Zula May Gilkerson Swart, was born Christmas Day 1917 on a farm in Adams Township southeast of Seneca, Nemaha County, Kansas. Her early childhood and education were in Nemaha County. She attended district #38 Head, a rural school. Likely 23 August 1929 the Swart family left Nemaha County moving west to a farm near Campus, Grinnell Township, Gove County, Kansas. She took and passed the diploma examination in Grinnell as she was recognized as a 1932 Star School 8th grade graduate in Gove County, Kansas. She began her high school education at Grinnell Rural High School in 1932; completing and graduating as valedictorian in 1936. She was considered a member of the Grinnell Methodist-Episcopal Church.

By September 1936, she began teaching at Pleasant View School. In 1937 Dorothy attended and graduated from Wichita Business College in Wichita, Kansas. In 1938 she had moved to Texas and had been hired by the Engelman Products Company. In 1940, she was reported living in Hidalgo County, Texas, and working at Engelman Club House as a stenographer earning $700 in 1939. Her next employment was being a secretary at F.H. Vahlsing, Inc. in Elsa, Texas, from about April 1940 until August 1942. Dorothy was a member of a bridge club in Elsa. She was a member at Weslaco, Texas of the Texas Women's Defense Corps (TWDC),Company D, 3rd Battalion, and had advanced from Private to the rank of a Corporal. Purposes of the TWDC included learning first aid, motor mechanics, fire fighting, military drill and other emergency aid duties. By 1942, Dorothy had obtained a civilian's pilot license having solo flying time credit.

Military Service

Miss Dorothy Swart was informed by Western Union telegram that she was accepted by the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) on 22 July 1942 as a candidate for officers training. She wired her acceptance response the same day. Her enlistment happened at a swearing in ceremony on 10 August 1942 in San Antonio, Texas. Her rank was listed as aviation cadet with service number A-800017. Her enlistment was for the duration of the War plus six months subject to the discretion of the President. She had been authorized for a twelve day enroute delay. The next day, 11 August 1942, she was at her parent's farm home near Oakley, Kansas. Dorothy rode a train reporting at Fort Des Moines, Iowa, on

August 24th for the basic officer training as a member of 8th Company 1st Regiment and known as Dorothy Swart, OC (Officer Candidate). One hardship, endured by the women in Iowa was an early September cold spell without heated buildings and no issued winter clothing. She became 3rd Officer (equivalent to 2nd Lieutenant) Dorothy L. Swart when she was commissioned with 4th WAAC class on 3 October 1942 at Fort Des Moines.

On 18 October 1942, she was again at her parents enroute to her next assignment, a Florida post on 1 November 1942. She traveled from Kansas to Denver, Colorado (22 Oct 1942), to Houston, Texas, to Rio Grande Valley towns of Elsa, Donna, McAllen, Weslaco and Harlingen, then flew back to Houston to New Orleans (31 Oct 1942) and finally Dayton Beach, Florida. This assignment was to help activate the 2nd WAAC Training Center at Daytona Beach. She was chosen Platoon Commander by men Tactical Officers at Daytona Beach.

Dorothy received orders on 11 Jan 1943 to report immediately to Washington, D.C. and she arrived on 13 January 1943 at 6:30 a.m. She had been assigned to W.A.A.C. headquarters at the Pentagon. Dorothy was promoted to 2nd Officer (equivalent to 1st Lt) effective 28 Jan 1943.

Dorothy made a surprise visit to her parents' home (Kansas) arriving 2 February 1943. Her parents honored her with a chili supper on February 3rd. The secrecy had started as she did not inform her parents of her next assignment, which was reporting to the European Theatre of Operations (ETO) in England. She was back in Washington, D.C. the following Sunday night. She probably left New York on the ____ and was at a resort town in Portugal on February 11th. 2nd Officer Dorothy arrived in England as one of the first two WAAC's by airplane on 13 February 1943. At a press conference of British and American reporters and photographers on the 15th, she was described as "comely" and "browned-eyed". Questions inquiring about her assignment were not answered, but Lieutenant Swart is quoted as saying "I left a boy friend behind in Elsa." Reporters used other sources learning she was to do communications work at the Eighth Bomber Command. She was working with 115 female members of the British Women's Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF) who were temporarily serving as cipher officers, telephone and teleprinter operators and stenographers.

She received a March 1943 luncheon invitation from the Lady Mayoress and Lord Mayor of London. In Dorothy's own words the luncheon was "in honor of Her Highness". This honoree was a member of the British royal family, Victoria Alexandra Alice Mary, known as Mary, Princess Royal.

The press had been addressing her as Lt. Swart since arriving in England. One supposed relaxation time activity was the game of croquet. In April 1943 she was referred to as 2nd Officer (equivalent to 1st Lieutenant) when pictured teaching a WAAF "how to pitch horseshoes". Less than two months later, the press reported "She said she had seen Winston Churchill" during a NBC message broadcast (4 April 1943) from London by Station KOA, but her letter home uses the term "met" instead of seen.

Dorothy attended "a luncheon given at the Mansion House in London attended by women leaders of the United Nations war effort" in May 1943. She met a captain of the Canadian Women's Army Corps at the luncheon. 1st Lieutenant Swart met a second time the guest of honor, the Princess Royal. Near the end of May, an older brother reported she wrote from England of purchasing a British "novelty", a bicycle (February 1943), and learning to ride. One obstacle was the opposite traffic pattern compared to the states. Another drawback was "she decided to move a bridge, but came out of that experience with a badly bent bicycle".

It is believed that some time between February and July, Dorothy had received additional communication training during a month's detached service to a British school. She was the first WAAC to receive this schooling.

A story reported in July 1943, after a WAAC battalion was in England, began "Who says a woman can't keep a secret?" The story described that Lt. Swart and her WAAC Captain arrived in England (February 1943) under secret orders; of which the adjutant general's office was aware and were waiting until "reports started coming in two women in strange uniforms were going around trying to find out where the 8th Air Force headquarters were located.". Those orders were "to report directly to Major General Ira C. Eaker" at the headquarters of the U.S. 8th Army Air Force. The WAAC officers attempts to locate the headquarters were futile as they would not show their secret orders so no one helped direct them. Colonel Ralph Pulsifer, assigned to the adjutant general's office, found the WAACs just outside U.S. headquarters in London. Questioning ensued; "Don't you know you are supposed to report to the adjutant general's office?" he asked. This is an Army regulation for military personnel coming into an area. "No, sir," the WAAC Captain replied, "my orders were to report to General Eaker." Colonel Pulsifer ordered the WAAC's to report to his office and then helped them to fulfill their secret orders.

Most likely, a press release in August 1943 revealed that Dorothy "helped set up the new confidential communication system at a bomber command." at a U.S. base somewhere in England. (After the war she revealed that "somewhere" was the major communications and operational facility underground headquarters at Wycombe Abbey School, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire; code name "Pinetree") This system included 24 hours per day coverage of a switchboard manned by 3 shifts of now WACs as President Roosevelt had signed on 1 July 1943 the legislation for the name change and making these women a part of the U.S. Army. Some of the battalion of Army women were telephone operators and had received a short British telephone methods course in London. These women replaced WAAF and the changeover was apparently very quick as Dorothy is quoted saying "We don't mess around."

She wrote a v-mail letter home dated 11 August 1943. (Besides what has already been stated about her time in England, she has met the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester, "but still would like to meet the King and Queen" (and she missed that opportunity as the King and Queen are pictured at the base reviewing the WACs on 11 May 1945…one will learn why later) and "have seen the Buckingham Palace, Westminister Abbey, St. Paul's Cathedral, House of Parliament, Big Ben and the River Thames" plus Oxford and Cambridge colleges and the King and Queen's country home, Windsor Castle.)

In September 1943 a Texas newspaper reported Lieutenant Swart had become the communications officer, a temporary assignment, within the U.S. 8th Army Air Force at a Flying Fortress bomber station. About the middle of the month she was sworn into the Women's Army Corps and officially became 1st Lieutenant retroactive to 1 September 1943. Also at this time, Dorothy was not the highest ranking WAC in England, but was the WAC with the most seniority in England as the Captain with whom she arrived had returned stateside.

Dorothy was in possession of a used 35mm camera and film in November 1943. The camera was sent to her from Mr. Hamilton (believed to be a former employer when she worked in Texas).

During February 1944, Lt. Swart was providing an interview from England on the Mutual Broadcasting System, which was heard by her parents in Kansas.

It appears Dorothy had a chance meeting with a pilot in London during March 1944. This pilot was probably the earlier mentioned Texas boyfriend; at this time he was Lt. Michael Farmer Groom.

In March 1944, Dorothy has been promoted becoming Captain Dorothy Swart. Headquartered underground, Captain Swart was an operations officer for the Eighth Air Force led now by Lt. General James H. Doolittle. She was previously a specialist in the communications section. As operations officer, her peacetime secretary skills were blended with her wartime communication training and skills to provide indispensable first reports on the daily German targets that were bombed. "…her reports are the first over-all description of the missions."

A letter sent to her sister in July 1944 made the following comment after she had requested a coffee pot be mailed to her; "They drink tea mostly & I think because don't know how to make good coffee."

Although a letter home to her parents near the end of October 1944 was censor stamped, Dorothy refers to herself as Commanding Officer (C.O.) of the 417th Signal Battalion. Within the letter Captain Swart wrote "I have about 10 men in my company – they would come around last night and ask me for a dance – introduce themselves and call me their C.O. – most of them say they daren't write home and tell the folks at home that they have a WAC for a C.O. but I asked them not to consider it too much of a disaster and try to overlook the WAC part – they are a grand bunch."

Captain Swart finished her job within the Signal Corps on 30 December 1944 as she had been granted moving into Air Corps Operations as of 1 January 1945. It allowed her to again wear little wings. At some point in time she had been assigned as assistant operations officer at 8th AAF headquarters at Wycombe Abbey.

Nineteen days before V-E day on 8 May 1945, Dorothy flew aboard a B-17 which may have been piloted by Major John Hutton Stark from England to Frankfort, Germany. For her it was a sightseeing opportunity. On the way back to England and after crossing the German border at Aachen, Captain Swart was in the co-pilot's seat and was given control of the stick; she was flying the bomber. In 8 ½ hours she had traveled over 1000 miles leaving England, crossing the English Channel with airtime above France, Belgium and Germany. In her words, "When Monty crossed the Rheine-he made history for the world. When I crossed the Rheine- I made history for Dorothy". ETO tokens added to her collection from this day were a silver Graf Zepplyn pin and a damaged Hitler photo autographed by the crew and passengers.

Captain Dorothy L. Swart was married to John Merl Tatum, two days after V-E Day the afternoon of 10 May 1945 in High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire, England, at All Saints Parish Church by Colonel Walter Dorre, Chaplain, assisting the Vicar. "The bride was given away by Colonel Edward Toro." Her bridesmaid was Captain Mary Johnston. Lieutenant General James "Jimmy" Doolittle, commander of the Eighth Air Force, attended the wedding and at the reception in the officer's club, he gave the toast to the bride and groom. The honeymooners headed for London to the Berkeley Square area with a military driver. General F. L. Anderson offered his flat at 41 Berekely Square for a couple of nights. The next day the couple learned they had one more day and luckily obtained a reservation at the Mayfair. Mr. Tatum left early evening May 13 from Kings Cross Station for the United States.

She notified her parents in July 1945 she was at an embarkation center near Liverpool, England. However, Dorothy wrote in a letter that she had returned to the USA aboard the Queen Mary sailing from Greenock, Scotland, on July 28. The ship sailed past the Statute of Liberty at 4:15 a.m. on August 5. She was the first person down the gangplank at 6:45 a.m.

Captain Dorothy Swart Tatum was honorably discharged likely September 1945 serving nearly three years in the WAC's with 30 months overseas. "She served longer than any other WAC in the ETO". Apparently Dorothy selected to take her 50 days of terminal leave when she was discharged.

On the Homefront

While serving in August 1945, Dorothy received a pass allowing her and her husband John to travel by train to the Oakley, Kansas area to visit her parents so she could introduce "Johnnie" in person. They returned to New York. Dorothy had an illness but feeling better she and husband John moved to a home on 15 October 1945 in Great Neck, Long Island, NY. She was admitted to Mitchell Field Hospital, Great Neck, Long Island, New York, on 25 October 1945. On December 10th, she gave caesarian birth to a premature baby daughter. Her hometown Kansas newspaper reported proud parents, but sadly the baby, Jedney Louise Tatum, passed within hours on 11 December 1945.

In the afternoon of February 12, 1946, Dorothy Swart Tatum, passed away at Mitchell Field Hospital after health complications of flu, bronchial pneumonia, and as one newspaper headline wrote "T. B. of Blood Stream". A form obtained from military sources has cause of death as "Empyema caused by tubercle bacillus" and decomposition was noted as gangrene – tuberculosis. By some news articles, a contributing factor was her service in underground conditions at the 8th Air Force headquarters in England. Her casket was transported to Nemaha County, Kansas by train escorted by a WAC officer. Her funeral service was held in Oneida Methodist Church at Oneida, Kansas, on Sunday, February 17th. She was buried in the family plot in the Oneida Cemetery, Nemaha County, Kansas.

It is believed Captain Dorothy Swart Tatum's name is inscribed on the Wall of Honor at the Oakley Kansas VFW.

This story was written by Michael Philbrick of Seneca, Kansas, and in collaboration with niece Deborah Rowley Mercer of Centennial, Colorado, to honor and remember this WWII fallen service member. If you noticed anything missing in this profile, you may contact the author. The author's email is located at the bottom of the story page, next to the words "Composed by:".

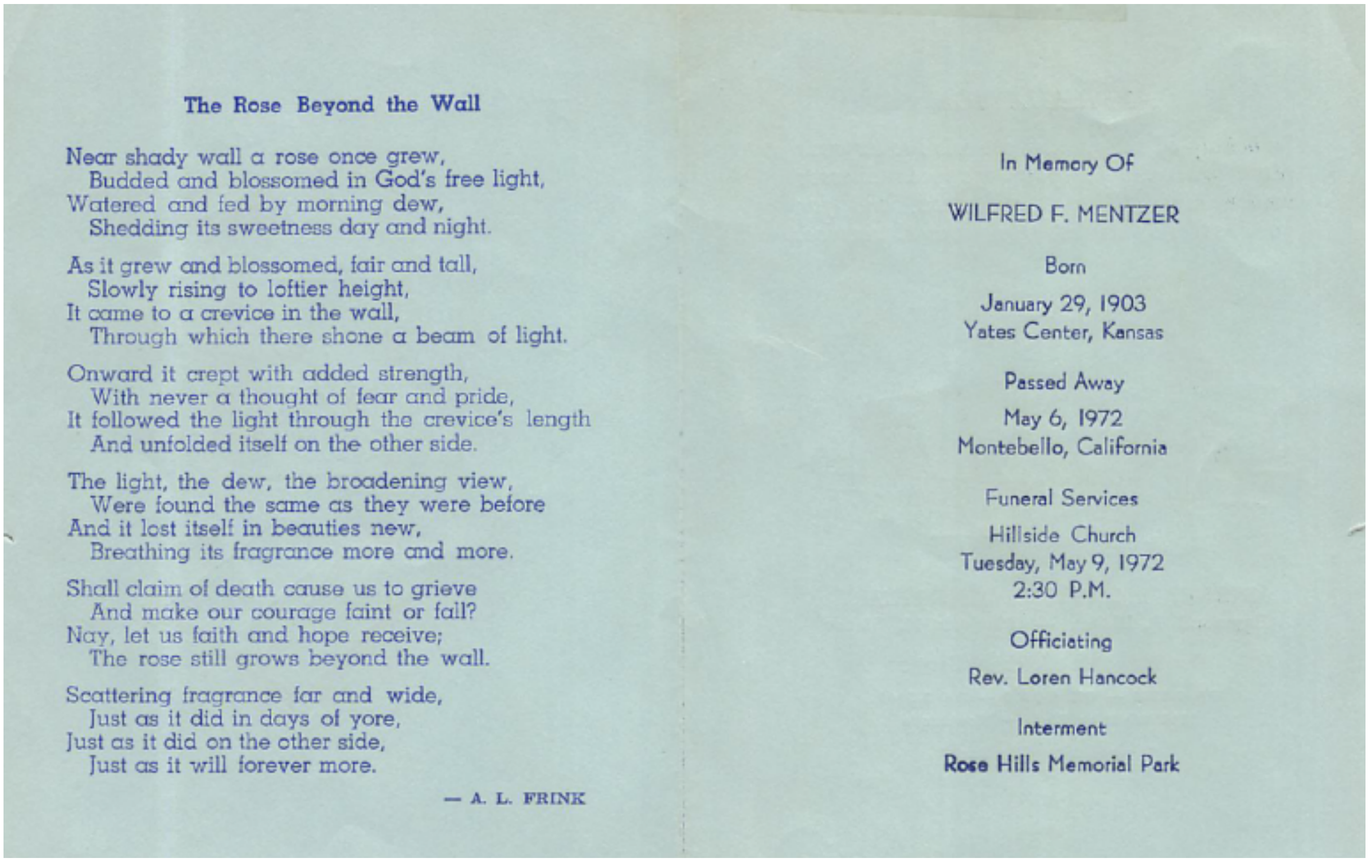
This story is part of the Stories Behind the Stars project (www.storiesbehindthestars.org .) This is a national effort of volunteers to write the stories of all 400,000+ of the US WWII fallen here on Fold3. Can you help write these stories? Related to this, there will be a smart phone app that will allow people to visit any war memorial or cemetery, scan the fallen person's name and read his/her story.

Friday Finds

By Marcia Crawford Philbrick
May 30, 2025
Mentzer
https://heartlandgenealogy.org/2025/05/30/friday-finds-69/

FRIDAY FINDS
FRIDAY FINDS
HEARTLAND GENEALOGY BLOG

Today's Friday Find is a funeral program for Wilfred F. Mentzer—a cherished keepsake preserved by my grandmother, Pauline Mentzer Briles. Wilfred and Pauline were double first cousins, sharing both sets of grandparents: George and Emiline (Minnick) Mentzer, and Thurston and Salime (Crandall) Wells. This rare family connection adds extra meaning to the discovery and preservation of Wilfred's memorial.



The Rose Beyond the Wall

Near shady wall a rose once grew,
Budded and blossomed in God's free light,
Watered and fed by morning dew,
Shedding its sweetness day and night.

As it grew and blossomed, fair and tall,
Slowly rising to loftier height,
It came to a crevice in the wall,
Through which there shone a beam of light.

Onward it crept with added strength,
With never a thought of fear and pride,
It followed the light through the crevice's length
And unfolded itself on the other side.

The light, the dew, the broadening view,
Were found the same as they were before
And it lost itself in beauties new,
Breathing its fragrance more and more.

Shall claim of death cause us to grieve
And make our courage faint or fall?
Nay, let us faith and hope receive;
The rose still grows beyond the wall.

Scattering fragrance far and wide,
Just as it did in days of yore,
Just as it did on the other side,
Just as it will forever more.

— A. L. FRINK

In Memory Of

WILFRED F. MENTZER

Born

January 29, 1903
Yates Center, Kansas

Passed Away

May 6, 1972
Montebello, California

Funeral Services

Hillside Church
Tuesday, May 9, 1972
2:30 P.M.

Officiating

Rev. Loren Hancock

Interment

Rose Hills Memorial Park

The Rose Beyond the Wall
Near shady wall a rose once grew,
Budded and blossomed in God's free light,
Watered and fed by morning dew,
Shedding its sweetness day and night.

As it grew and blossomed, fair and tall,
Slowly rising to loftier height,
It came to a crevice in the wall,
Through which there shone a beam of light.

Onward it crept with added strength,
With never a thought of fear and pride,
It followed the light through the crevice's length
And unfolded itself on the other side.

The light, the dew, the broadening view,
Were found the same as they were before
And it lost itself in beauties new,
Breathing its fragrance more and more.

Shall claim of death cause us to grieve
And make our courage faint or fall?
Nay, let us faith and hope receive;
The rose still grows beyond the wall.

Scattering fragrance far and wide,
Just as it did in days of yore,
Just as it did on the other side,
Just as it will forever more.

— A. L. Frink

In Memory Of
WILFRED F. MENTZER

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Finding this funeral program not only preserves a moment in our family’s history, but also serves as a reminder of the close-knit ties that connected the Mentzer and Wells families. As I continue to uncover and share these pieces of the past, I’m grateful for the foresight of relatives like my grandmother who held onto these mementos. If you have similar family treasures tucked away, I encourage you to revisit them—you never know what stories they might help you tell.

ABC Biography: Hugh Judson Crawford

By Marcia Crawford Philbrick
May 31, 2025
ABC Biography,Crawford
https://heartlandgenealogy.org/2025/05/31/abc-biography-hugh-judson-crawford/

HEARTLAND
GENEALOGY
CRAWFORD
FAMILY

A Life of Service: The Story of Hugh Judson Crawford (1902–1987)

Early Life in Dodge City

Hugh Judson Crawford was born on September 16, 1902, in Dodge City, Kansas, to Judson Foster Crawford and his wife[3]. Known in his youth as “Hughie,” he grew up surrounded by the dusty plains of Ford County. Census records from 1905 through 1925 consistently show Hugh living with his parents in Dodge City, including on Avenue G in 1920[8–11,14].

These early years were shaped by life in a growing frontier town—one that was transitioning from its Wild West past to a settled Kansas community. Dodge City in the early 20th century offered both the challenges and opportunities of a rapidly modernizing America.

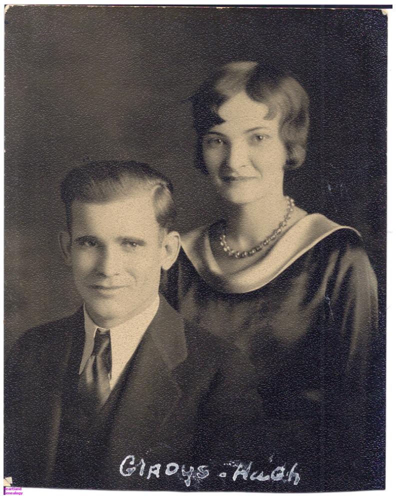
A Passion for Learning

Hugh attended Dodge City High School, where he threw himself into school life. Yearbooks from 1921 and 1922 list him in interclass basketball, track, Boys’ Glee Club, school newspaper staff, and even a stage play called *The Private*

Secretary[12–13].

After high school, Hugh attended Kansas State Teachers College in Emporia. By 1930, he had applied for and was awarded a Bachelor of Science in Education[15,20]. This degree was a stepping stone to his lifelong vocation—education.

Marriage and Family Life



Hugh married **Gladys Josephine Vanderwilt** on December 8, 1929, in Solomon, Kansas. The *Solomon Tribune* described their high-noon wedding, noting Hugh's "enviable record for scholarship and character"[16]. Gladys, a fellow teacher, became Hugh's partner in both life and profession.

Together, they raised two daughters, **Georgiann** and **Mary**. Sadly, Georgiann passed away before her parents. Their daughter Mary Loman and her descendants have continued to share the Crawford family legacy[36].

From Kansas to Arizona: A Career in Teaching

Fresh from graduation, Hugh was hired to teach physics and manual arts at Pawnee Rock High School in Barton County, Kansas[21]. By the mid-1930s, the Crawfords relocated to Arizona, where both Hugh and Gladys taught in the small town of Picacho[22–23,36].

In the 1940 census, Hugh is listed as head of household in Pinal County, Arizona, living with Gladys and daughter Georgiann[22]. Their life revolved around education, community service, and adapting to the opportunities the American West offered.

World War II Service

Despite being in his 40s, Hugh enlisted in the U.S. Naval Reserves on February 15, 1943, in Phoenix, Arizona[24]. He served as **Carpenter's Mate First Class (CM1c)** with the U.S. Navy's Construction Battalion—more famously known as the **SeaBees**.

His wartime service included:

- **Training** in Virginia and Rhode Island
- **Deployment** to the Aleutian Islands aboard the *Carl S. Schurez*, arriving in Attu in August 1943
- **Construction duties** on Shemya Island, where he helped build an airstrip for the Naval Air Station
- **Special mission** escorting Russian observers to observe American amphibious landings at **Leyte and Lingayen Gulf** in the Philippines
- **Travel aboard the aircraft carrier Enterprise**, then returning to Kamchatka Peninsula in Siberia

He was discharged on July 30, 1945, from Camp Elliot in San Diego and held a Class 1A Reserve status for 10 years after the war[24].

Return to Education: Alaska and the Navajo Nation

After the war, Hugh resumed teaching, and in 1952, he and Gladys moved to **Alaska** to work for the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs[25]. Hugh taught in **Wainwright**, a remote village on the Arctic Ocean. In 1957, he was listed as a delegate to the Alaska Education Association convention in Fairbanks[26].

By 1963, the couple returned to the Southwest, teaching at the **Kaibeto Boarding School** on the Navajo Reservation until their joint retirement in 1970[25,36]. Their work in Native education helped support cultural continuity during a time of great change in American Indian policy.

A Life of Service and Leadership

In retirement, Hugh continued to serve. He was active in **Freemasonry**, and in the early 1980s, he received the **Knight of the York Cross of Honour**—a distinction earned by only a few. He had served as:

- Master of Gila Valley Lodge of Masons (1981)
- High Priest of Burning Bush Chapter, Royal Arch Masons (1981)
- Master of Tyrian Council, Royal and Select Masters (1982)
- Commander of Crusade Commandery, Knight Templar (1980)[29]

This honor recognized his commitment to moral character, leadership, and public service.

Final Years and Legacy

Hugh passed away on August 7, 1987, in Casa Grande, Arizona, at the age of 84[32]. His obituary remembered him as a respected teacher and veteran. Services were held at the First Presbyterian Church of Florence, and he was buried at Valley of the Sun Mortuary in Chandler, Arizona[33].

Gladys survived him by nearly two decades, passing away in 2004 at the age of 96[35–36]. She had gone back to school for her bachelor's degree, taught extensively, and was active in civic life. Her legacy, like Hugh's, reflects a life well lived in the service of others.

Historical Context

Hugh's story follows the arc of 20th-century America: born in the horse-and-buggy days, educated during the rise of public schooling, a veteran of a global war, and an educator in rural America and among Indigenous populations. His work across Kansas, Arizona, Alaska, and the Navajo Nation placed him at the intersection of American ideals and real-world service.

Whether building airstrips in Shemya or teaching science on the Arctic coast, Hugh Crawford lived a life of substance and quiet heroism.

📣 Call to Action

If you have photos, memories, or stories about Hugh or Gladys Crawford, I'd love to hear from you. Feel free to leave a comment, share this post, or contact me through the Heartland Genealogy blog.

📝 Sources

1. Crawford Family Bible
2. Kansas State Birth and Marriage Records
3. 1905–1940 Federal and Kansas Census Records
4. Emporia Teachers College Yearbooks (1921–1927)
5. *Solomon Tribune*, 12 Dec 1929
6. *The Bulletin* (Emporia), 1930
7. U.S. Navy Military Service File compiled by Gladys Crawford
8. *Fairbanks Daily News*, 16 Oct 1957
9. Crawford Family Papers and Obituaries
10. *Arizona Republic*, 10 Aug 1987
11. *Florence* (undated), 2004

For full citations, see the original report shared with this biography on

- FamilySearch Profile of Hugh Judd Crawford [LCLY-8TG]
- Heartland Genealogy Tree on Ancestry under profile of Hugh Judson Crawford

Saturday Night Genealogy Fun

By Marcia Crawford Philbrick
June 1, 2025
SaturdayNightGenealogyFun
https://heartlandgenealogy.org/2025/06/01/saturday-night-genealogy-fun-158/

Calling all Genea-Musings Fans:

It's Saturday Night again –

Time for some more Genealogy Fun!!

Your mission, should you decide to accept it (cue the Mission Impossible! music) is to:

1) Who are your 32 3rd-great-grandparents? List them (with birth names). Tell us when and where they were born, married and died. [NOTE: This is easily done in your genealogy software program or online family tree by making an Ahnentafel or Ancestors report from yourself as #1, then copy and paste.]

Generation 6

32. **Nelson Garret Crawford-199**: born 17 October 1808 in Preble, Ohio, United States; married 3 September 1833 in Warren, Indiana, United States; died 21 March 1864 in Warren, Indiana, United States.

33. **Martha Smith-200**: born 3 August 1815 in Indiana, United States; died 1 August 1871 in Warren, Indiana, United States.

34. **Zebulon Foster-214**: born 19 August 1808 in Pike, Ohio, United States; married 14 February 1833 in Pike, Ohio, United States; died 5 September 1889 in Warren, Indiana, United States.

35. **Caroline Ostrander-215**: born 23 March 1814 in Kingston, Ross, Ohio, United States; died 3 June 1871 in Warren, Indiana, United States.

36. **Horatio Hammond-223**: born 24 October 1798 in Connecticut, United States; married 14 April 1825 in Medina, Medina, Ohio, United States; died 7 November 1879 in Knoxville, Knox, Illinois, United States.

37. **Louisa Fisk-224**: born 5 August 1806 in Watertown, Middlesex, Massachusetts, United States; died 17 August 1874 in Ontario, Knox, Illinois, United States.

38. **James Barr Ralston-1232**: born 20 December 1811 in Pennsylvania, United States; married about 1836 in Armstrong, Pennsylvania, United States; died 4 July 1904 in Grundy, Iowa, United States.

39. **Nancy Jane McCormick-1233**: born 15 October 1818 in Westmoreland, Pennsylvania, United States; died 3 November 1907 in Felix Township, Grundy, Iowa, United States.

40. **Hiram M. Currey-517**: born about 1787; married 28 September 1824 in Edgar, Edgar, Illinois, United States, death date unknown

41. **Rachel Harris-1278**: died before 28 March 1842.

42. **Henry F. Burke-518**: born 30 April 1811; married 22 October 1835 in Monroe, Kentucky, United States; died 30 October 1845 in Weston, Platte, Missouri, United States.

43. **Elizabeth Ann Bland-519**: born 25 December 1813; died before February 1865 in Platte, Missouri, United States.

44. **Aaron Hutchinson-10394**: born 1803 in Smyrna, Chenango County New York; died 28 March 1837 in New York, New

York, United States.

45. **Sarah Merry-10395**: born 1813; died 6 March 1845 in New York, New York, United States.

46. **William Gillies Harding-560**: born 1804 in Hampton, Kings, New Brunswick; married 16 September 1830 in Westfield Parish, Kings, New Brunswick; died 15 August 1865 in Mount Vernon Township, Black Hawk, Iowa, United States.

47. **Elizabeth Fowler-10029**: born 1804 in Westfield Parish, Kings, New Brunswick; died 29 January 1846 in Westfield Parish, Kings, New Brunswick.

48. **Alexander Briles-2059**: born 14 March 1817 in North Carolina, United States; died 14 January 1900 in Neosho Township, Coffey, Kansas, United States.

49. **Sarah Rush-2060**: born 1816 in North Carolina, United States; died 2 September 1872 in Coffey, Kansas, United States.

50. **William T. Thompson-2064**: born 29 December 1820 in Ohio, United States; married 29 October 1842 in Warrick, Indiana, United States; died 12 September 1898.

51. **Polly Ann Evans-4511**: born 25 July 1821 in Indiana, United States; died 14 April 1896 in Wapello, Iowa, United States.

52. **John Lewis Ricketts-2735**: born 22 November 1812 in Fleming, Kentucky, United States; married 3 December 1846 in Clinton, Indiana, United States; died 23 December 1888 in Clinton, Indiana, United States.

53. **Orilda Matilda Reed-2736**: born 20 January 1828 in Jennings, Indiana, United States; died 28 June 1900 in Clinton, Indiana, United States.

54. **Samuel Henry St. George Christy-7734**: born 11 September 1819 in Indiana, United States; married 3 March 1842 in Fayette, Ohio, United States; died 24 March 1904 in Clinton, Indiana, United States.

55. **Lyda Gallimore-7735**: born 25 March 1824 in Ohio, United States; died 1 February 1864 in Clinton, Indiana, United States.

56. **Phillip Andrew Mentzer-1697**: born about March 1793; married 23 May 1816; died 19 December 1845 in Stow, Middlesex, Massachusetts, United States.

57. **Orinda Miles-1698**: born 14 January 1798 in Gardner, Worcester, Massachusetts, United States; died 18 October 1861 in Stow, Middlesex, Massachusetts, United States.

58. **John Minnick-1696**: born 22 June 1822 in Carlisle, Cumberland, Pennsylvania, United States; married 28 October 1843 in Carlisle, Cumberland, Pennsylvania, United States; died 21 April 1903 in Kewanee, Henry, Illinois, United States.

59. **Elizabeth Mary Jones-1806**: born about 1816 in Pennsylvania, United States; died 20 July 1869 in Kewanee, Henry, Illinois, United States.

60. **Ozias Wells-1833**: born 15 May 1796 in Northampton, Fulton County, New York; married 18 March 1818 in Sullivan, Madison, New York, United States; died 5 August 1832 in Princeton, Mercer, New Jersey, United States.

61. **Mary Kennedy-1834**: born 21 February 1799 in Halfmoon, Saratoga, New York, United States; died 23 March 1885 in Kalamo, Eaton, Michigan, United States.

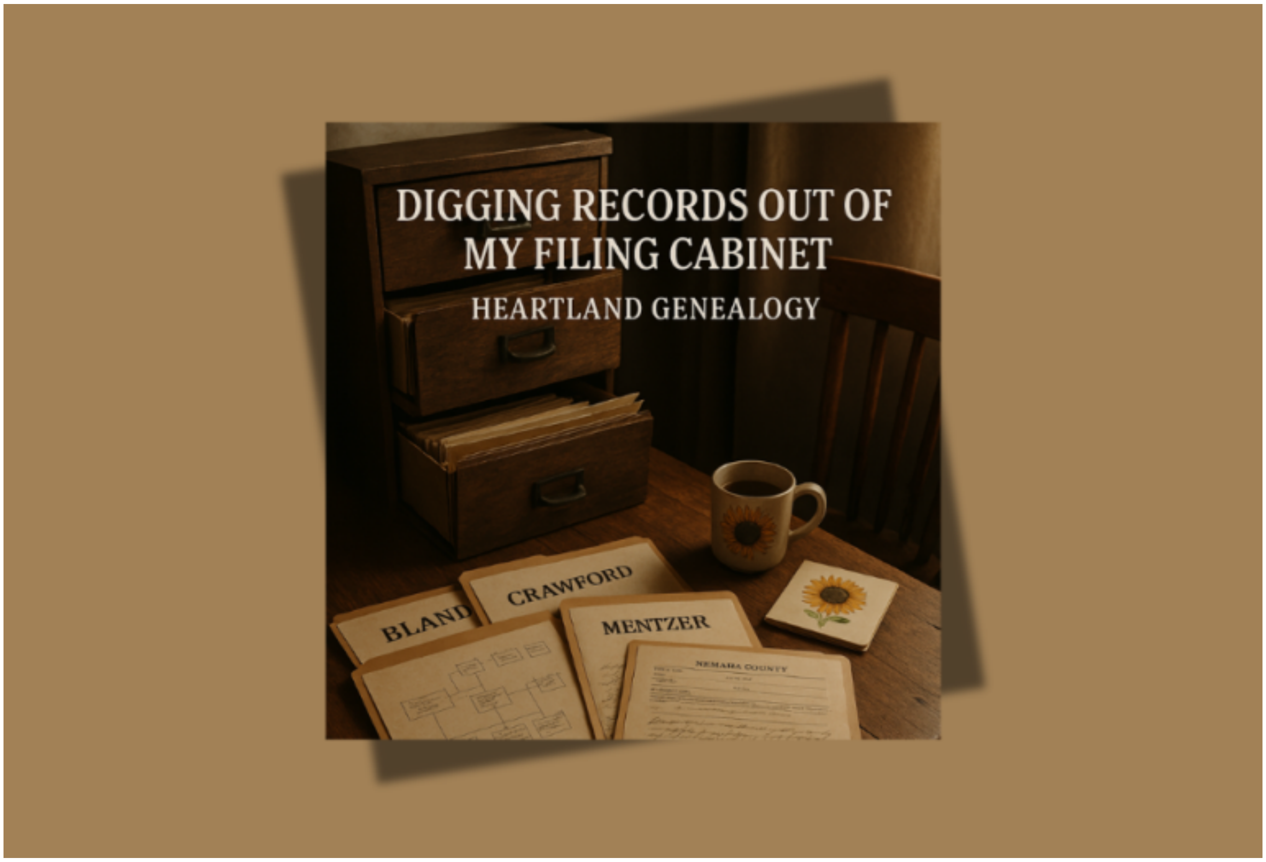
62. **Lewis Crandall-1796**: born 19 August 1807 in New York; married about 1830; died about March 1852 in Van Buren, Iowa, United States.

63. **Almira Nafus-4939**: born about 1807 in New York, United States; died before 1846.

Thank you Randy Seaver of Genea-Musings fame for this challenge.

Mondays Diggings: Bradshaw Letter

By Marcia Crawford Philbrick
June 2, 2025
Briles
https://heartlandgenealogy.org/2025/06/02/mondays-diggings-bradshaw-letter/



Do you remember the *Genealogical Helper*? I know I'm showing my age, but that publication was one of the go-to tools when I first began my genealogy journey. As the letter below suggests, placing an ad in its pages helped me connect with another Briles researcher.

Thanks to ChatGPT, I was able to transcribe a handwritten letter I received in 1983 from a Briles cousin.

What follows is the full transcription of that letter, with corrections shown in *italics*.

> Briles
>
> (Mrs. Vernie)
> Yeleta Buchanan Bradshaw
> 2204 Rolls Court off. Road
> Ft. Worth TX 76114
>
> Briles Line on? ***Letter.017***
>
> Dear Marcia:
>
> Was so happy to hear from you. Out of my 18–20 names in the Gen. Helper I received about 20 letters. Yours was the only Briles. My husband's line goes like this:

Young Dr. ***Sr.*** **Henry Nease Sr.** b. 22 Dec 1805 Randolph Co NC
d. 6-9-1883 ***6-1-1883*** Ellis Co TX m. 1 Mar 1828 NC

Briles, Mary b. 20 Feb 1806 NC
d. 3 Aug 1884 ***1883*** Ellis Co TX – Italy Cemetery

all born ***NC***
Children: N(f), m(m), also ***Clyde*** Arnold
Valentine, John, Jacob * **& Henry Nease Jr.**
(on 1850 Census in Italy, TX, Ellis Co. 1859) – ***no parenthesis around this statement in original***

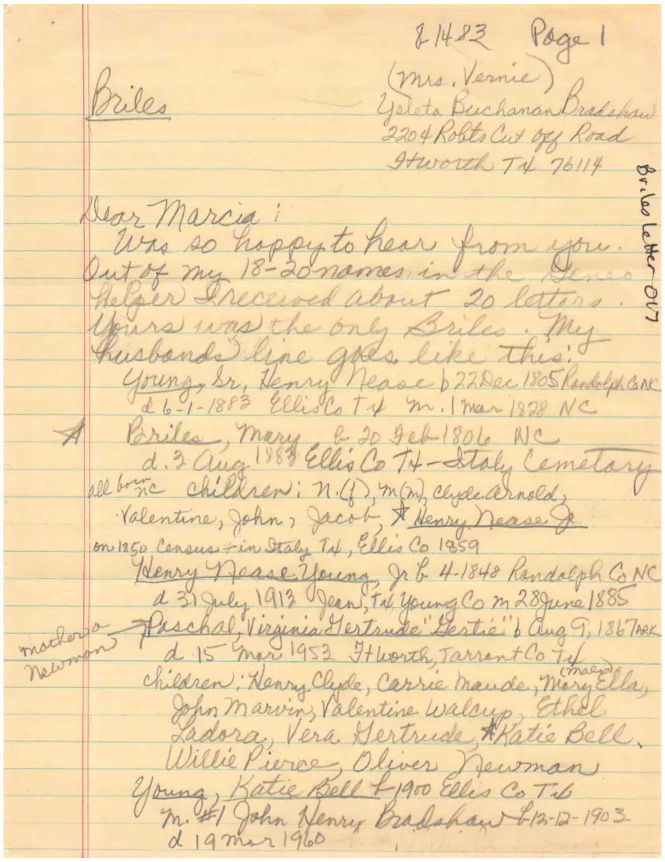
Henry Nease Young Jr. b. 4-1-1845 ***1848*** Randolph Co NC
d. 3 July 1913 Jean, TX Young Co m. 28 June 1885

Paschal, Virginia Gertrude "Gertie" Aug 1, 1867 – TX ***ARK***
d. 15 Mar 1953 Ft. Worth, Tarrant Co TX

Note in column next to Paschal, Virginia that was not transcribed: ***mother a Newman***

Children: Henry Clyde, Carrie Maude, Mozelle, ***Mary Ella (Mae)***
John Marvin, Valentine Wallace, Ethel,
Ladora, Vera Gertrude *Katie Bell
Willie Pierce, Oliver **Newman** – *(Newman transcribed in bold when original was not bold)*

Young, Katie Bell b. 1900 Ellis Co TX
m. (1st) #1John Henry Bradshaw b. 12-12-1903
d. 19 Mar 1960



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Briles

(Mrs. Vernie)
Ysleta Buchanan Bradshaw
2204 Robts Cut off Road
Ftworth Tx 76114

Briles Letter 017

Dear Marcia:
Was so happy to hear from you. Out of my 18-20 names in the Genes Helper I received about 20 letters. Yours was the only Briles. My husbands line goes like this:

Young, Sr, Henry Nease b 22 Dec 1805 Randolph Co NC
d 6-1-1883 Ellis Co Tx m. 1 Mar 1828 NC
A Briles, Mary b 20 Feb 1806 NC
d. 3 Aug 1883 Ellis Co Tx – Italy Cemetary
all born NC children: N.(f), m(m), Clyde Arnold,
Valentine, John, Jacob, ★ Henry Nease Jr
on 1850 Census + in Italy Tx, Ellis Co 1859
Henry Nease Young, Jr b 4-1848 Randolph Co NC
d 3 July 1913 Jean, Tx Young Co m 28 June 1885
mother a Newman
Paschal, Virginia Gertrude "Gertie" b Aug 9, 1867 ARK
d 15 Mar 1953 Ft Worth, Tarrant Co Tx
children: Henry Clyde, Carrie Maude, Mary Ella (mae),
John Marvin, Valentine Walcup, Ethel
Ladora, Vera Gertrude, ★Katie Bell.
Willie Pierce, Oliver Newman
Young, Katie Bell b 1900 Ellis Co Tx
m. #1 John Henry Bradshaw b 12-12-1903
d 19 mar 1960

Briles
Page 2

8-83

Yeleta Bradshaw
2204 Rolls Cutoff Rd.
Ft. Worth TX 76114

Katie Young / John “Henry” Bradshaw
Children: Vernie Young Bradshaw
Vernie Young Bradshaw b. ~~29~~ ***28*** May 1928 [line below with arrow pointing up: ***Young Co TX***]
m. 22 April 1950, Tarrant Co. TX ~~to~~
Ysleta Lee Buchanan b. 20 May 1931 –
Tarrant County

Father: Henry Allen Buchanan Sr.
Mother: Vida Delilah Davis

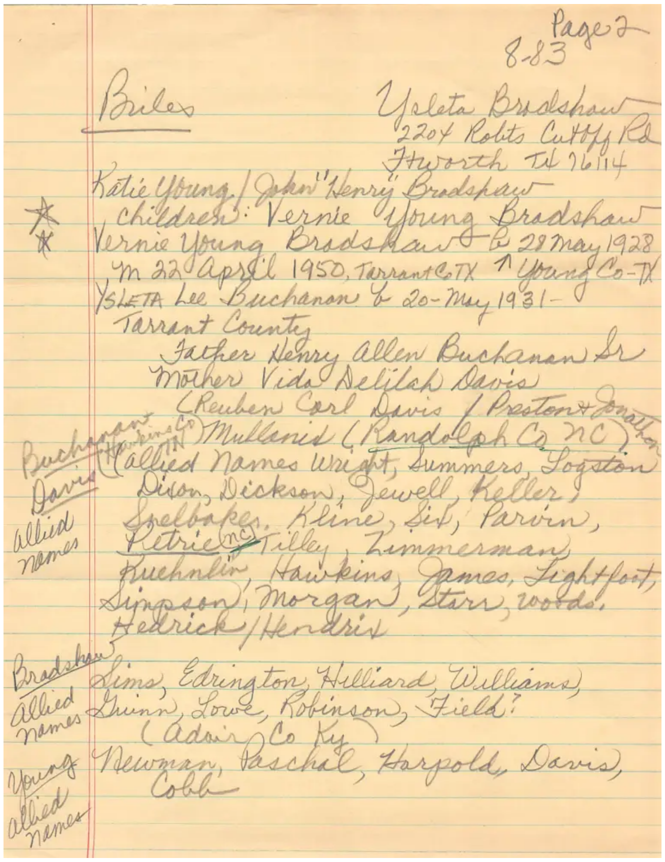
Reuben Carl Davis (Preston ~~/ Young)~~ ***& Jonathon)***
~~Mullens~~ ***Mullanix***(Randolph Co. N.C.)

IN Right Column:
Buchanan & Davis (Hawkins Co TN)
Allied Names

Allied Names: Wright, Summers, ~~Layton~~, ***Logston***
Dixon, Dickson & Jewell, ~~Holder~~, ***Keller***
~~Spurlock~~, ***Snelbaker,*** Kline, ~~Sit~~, ***Six***, Parvin,
~~Petrick~~ ***Petrie*** (~~mc~~), ***(NC)*** Tilley, Zimmerman,
~~Freehling,~~ ***Kuehnlin*** Hawkins, James, Lightfoot,
Simpson, Morgan, Starr, ~~Riddle,~~ ***Woods***
~~Frederick~~ ***Hedrick***/ ~~Herdris~~ Hendrix

Bradshaw Allied Names:
~~Linns~~ ***Sims***, Edrington, Hilliard, Williams
Quinn, Lowe, Robinson, Fields?
(Adair Co KY)

Young Allied Names:
Newman, Paschal, Harpold, Davis,
~~Cole~~ ***Cobb***



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8-83

Briles

Yeleta Bradshaw
2204 Robts Cutoff Rd
Ftworth TX 76114

Katie Young / John "Henry" Bradshaw
★ children: Vernie Young Bradshaw
★ Vernie Young Bradshaw b 28 May 1928
m 22 April 1950, Tarrant Co TX ^ Young Co-TX
YSLETA Lee Buchanan b 20-May 1931-
Tarrant County
Father Henry Allen Buchanan Sr
Mother Vida Delilah Davis
(Reuben Carl Davis / Preston + Jonathan
(Hawkins Co TN) Mullenis (Randolph Co NC)

Buchanan
Davis
allied names
(allied Names Wright, Summers, Logston
Dixon, Dickson, Jewell, Keller)
Spelbaker, Kline, Sit, Parvin,
Petrie (NC) Tilley, Zimmerman,
Kuehnlin, Hawkins, James, Lightfoot,
Simpson, Morgan, Starr, Woods,
Hedrick / Hendrix

Bradshaw
allied names
Sims, Edrington, Hilliard, Williams,
Guinn, Lowe, Robinson, Field?
(Adair Co Ky)

Young
allied names
Newman, Paschal, Harpold, Davis,
Cobb

Briles
8-4-83
Page 3

Yeleta Bradshaw
2204 Rolls Cutoff Rd
Ft. Worth TX 76114

I have a list of early N.C. marriages.
If I can help you in that area,
please let me know. I feel our Briles
are related. My marriage records show

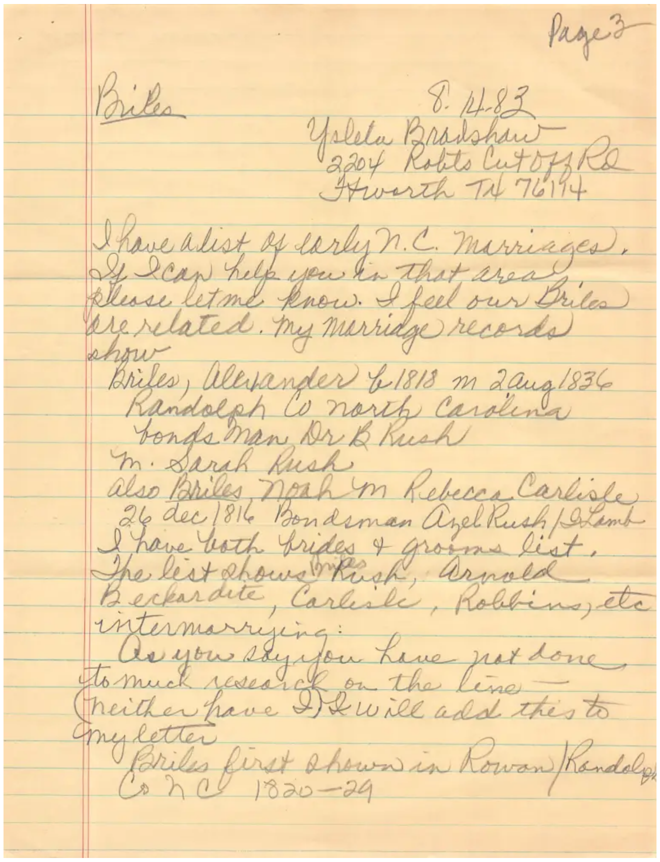
Briles, Alexander b. 1818 m. 2 Aug 1836
Randolph Co, North Carolina
~~to Joanna~~ ***bonds*** Man Dr. B. Rush
m. Sarah Rush

Also **Briles, Noah** m. Rebecca Carlisle
26 Dec 1816 – Bondsman ~~Angel~~ ***Azel*** Rush & J. Lamb

I have both brides & grooms list.
The list shows ***Briles*** Rush, Arnold,
Beckerdite, Carlisle, Robbins, etc.
intermarrying.

~~Are~~ ***As you say*** ~~you saying~~ you have not done
too much research on the line –
(neither have I). I will add this to
my letter.

Briles first shows in Rowan / Randolph
Co N.C. 1820–29



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Briles

8. 14-83
Yeleta Bradshaw
2204 Robts CutOff Rd
Ftworth TX 76114

I have a list of early N.C. Marriages. If I can help you in that area please let me know. I feel our Briles are related. My marriage records show
Briles, Alexander b 1818 m 2 aug 1836
Randolph Co North Carolina
bondsman Dr B Rush
m. Sarah Rush
also Briles Noah m Rebecca Carlisle
26 dec 1816 Bondsman Azel Rush / D Lamb
I have both brides & grooms list.
The list shows Briles Rush, Arnold
Beckardite, Carlisle, Robbins, etc
intermarrying:
As you say you have not done to much research on the line — (neither have I) I will add this to my letter
Briles first shown in Rowan / Randolph
Co N C 1820—29

All Randolph Co. NC Census
Briles
8-83
Page 4

Yeleta Bradshaw
2204 Roberts Cutoff
Ft. Worth TX 76114

1850 Randolph Co. N.C.
Alexander 32 b. 1818 NC
Sarah Rush 32 – “m. 2 Aug 1836”
Clark 12
Washington 10
Sarah 8
John 6
Jane 4
Robert 1

1840 Randolph Co N.C.
Briles M 20001 (Clark, Washington, Alexander)
F 00001 (Sarah)
pg 92 (in column)

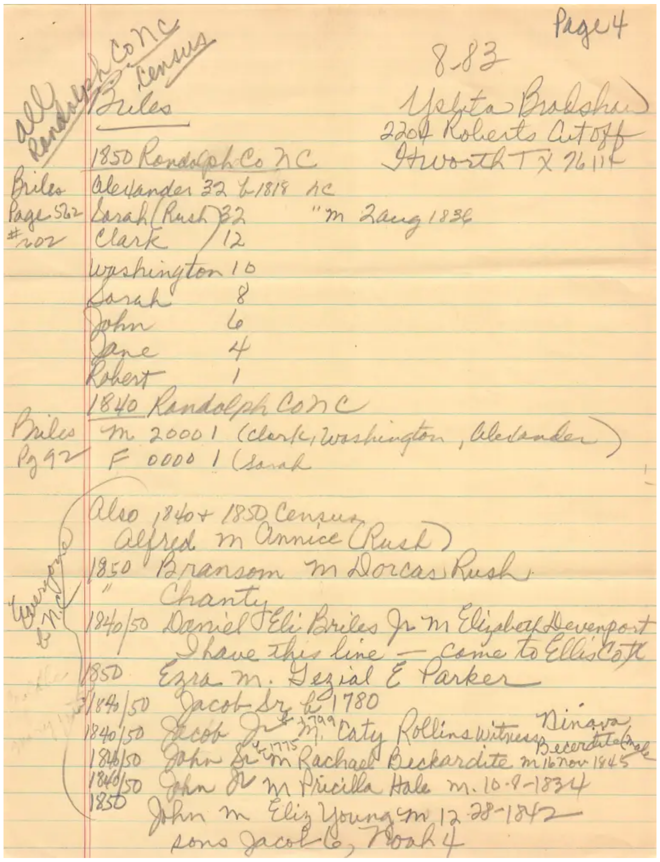
Also 1840 & 1850 Census:
Alfred m. Annice Rush
1850 Branson m. Dorcas Rush

“ Chanty
1840/50 Daniel ~~(W?)~~ Eli Briles Jr. m. Elizabeth Davenport

I have this line – came to Ellis Co TX

1850 Ezra m. ~~Dezial~~ ***Gezial*** E. Parker
1840/50 Jacob Sr. b. 1780
1840/50 Jacob Jr. m. ~~Katy~~ ***Caty*** Rollins *(witness ~~Nincy??~~* ***Nenava Becerdite****)*
1840/50 John Sr. ***b 1775*** m. Rachael Beckerdite m. ~~11~~ ***16*** Nov 1845
1840/50 John ~~W.~~ ***Jr*** m. Priscilla Hale m. ~~16~~ ***10***-8-1834
1850 John m. Eliz Young m. 12~~-22~~– *28-1842* ~~1852~~
sons Jacob ***6***, Noah ***4***

In column: Everyone b N.C.



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8-83
Yelota Bradshaw
2204 Roberts Cutoff
Ftworth TX 76114

all Randolph Co NC Census
Briles

1850 Randolph Co NC
Briles Page 562 #202
Alexander 32 b 1818 NC
Sarah (Rush) 32 " m 2 aug 1836
Clark 12
Washington 10
Sarah 8
John 6
Jane 4
Robert 1
1840 Randolph Co NC
Briles Pg 92
M 20001 (Clark, Washington, Alexander)
F 00001 (Sarah

Also 1840 + 1850 Census
Alfred m Annice (Rush)
1850 Bransom m Dorcas Rush
" Chanty
1840/50 Daniel Eli Briles Jr m Elizabeth Devenport
I have this line — came to Ellis Co TX
1850 Ezra m. Gezial E Parker
1840/50 Jacob Sr b 1780
1840/50 Jacob Jr b 1799 m. Caty Rollins witness Ninava Becerdite (male)
1840/50 John Sr b 1775 m Rachael Beckardite m 16 nov 1845
1840/50 John Jr m Pricilla Hale m. 10-8-1834
1850 John m Eliz Young m 12-28-1842
sons Jacob 6, Noah 4
Everyone b NC

8-83
Page 5

Briles
1840 / 1850 Randolph Co. N.C.
Briles, Noah Sr. 50 NC b. 1800
Rebecca (Carlisle) m. 12-26-1816 Witnessed ~~Angel~~ ***Azel*** Rush ~~& J. Lamb~~
Tabitha – 19 ~~– b.~~ 1831
John – 17 ~~– b. 1833~~ ***1829***
Annice/Annies – 14 ~~– b. 1836~~ ***1826***
Nathan – 12 ~~– b. 1838~~ ***1824***

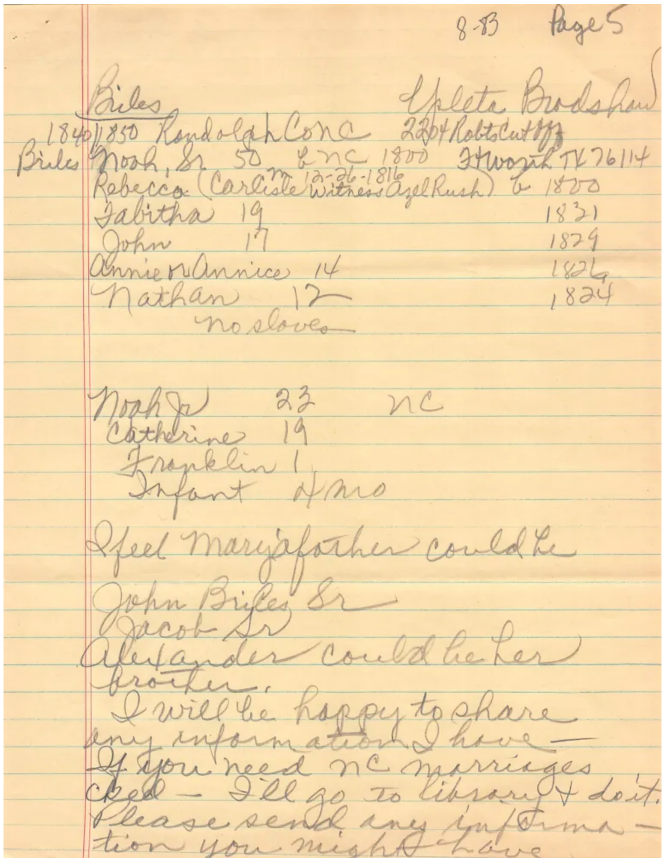
Noah – 23 – NC
Catherine – 19
Franklin – 1

Infant – 4 mo

Yeleta Bradshaw
2204 Rolls Cutoff
Ft. Worth TX 76114

I Feel ~~my grandfather~~ ***Mary's father*** could be
John Briles Sr.
Jacob ~~Jr.~~ *Sr.*Alexander – could be ~~[their]~~ ***her***
brother.

I will be happy to share
any information I have.
If you need NC marriages
checked – I'll go to library & do it.
Please send any information
you might have.



8-83 Page 5

Briles
Yeleta Bradshaw
1840/1850 Randolph Co NC
2204 Rolls Cut off
Briles Noah, Sr 50 b NC 1800
Ft Worth TX 76114
Rebecca (Carlisle m 12-26-1816 Witness Azel Rush) b 1800
Tabitha 19 1831
John 17 1829
Annie or Annice 14 1826
Nathan 12 1824
no slaves

Noah Jr 23 NC
Catherine 19
Franklin 1
Infant 4 mo

I feel Mary's father could be
John Briles Sr
Jacob Sr
Alexander could be her
brother.
I will be happy to share
any information I have —
If you need NC marriages
cked — I'll go to library & do it.
Please send any informa-
tion you might have

8-83
Page 6

Briles

Yeleta Bradshaw
2204 Rolls Cutoff, Ft. Worth TX 76114

I have an Ellis Co. Cemetery record
book. Many people from

Randolph Co. N.C. seemed to have
settled in that Co. Be happy
to ck information.

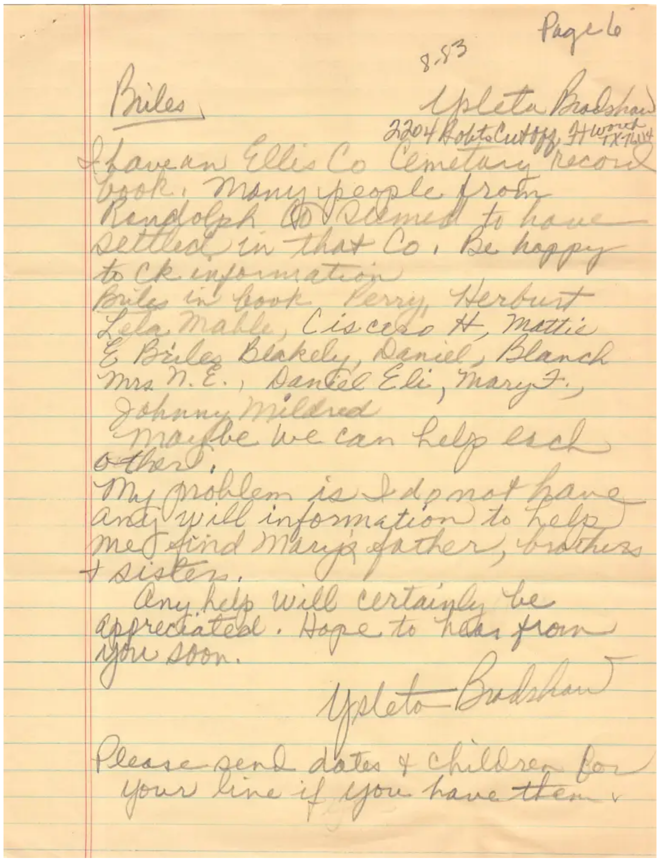
Briles in book: Perry, Herbert,
Lela, Mahala, ~~Criscora~~ ***Ciscero*** H., Mattie,
E. Briles, Blakely, Daniel, Blanch,
~~Erma~~ ***Mrs***. N.E., Daniel Eli, Mary F.,
Johnny, Mildred
Maybe we can help each
other!

My problem is I do not have
any will information to help
me find Mary's father, brothers
& sisters.

Any help will certainly be
appreciated. Hope to hear from
you soon.

Yeleta Bradshaw

Please send dates & children for
your line if you have them.



Page 6

8.83

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Yleta Bradshaw
2204 Robt. Cutoff, Ft Worth TX 76114

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Yleta Bradshaw

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your line if you have them.

Letters like this one are priceless reminders of how genealogical connections were built before the internet—through patience, printed queries, and handwritten replies. Preserving and revisiting this correspondence not only honors the effort of earlier researchers but also adds depth and heart to our family stories.

I’m grateful for the connection this letter represents and for the technology that now makes it easier to preserve and share these important pieces of our genealogical past.

If you have old letters tucked away, consider revisiting them—you never know what clues or connections they might still hold.

AI: Finding Connections

By Marcia Crawford Philbrick
June 3, 2025
Artificial Intelligence,Crawford
https://heartlandgenealogy.org/2025/06/03/ai-finding-connections/

HEARTLAND
GENEALOGY
AI
AI
HEARTLANDGENEALOGY

Do you have lines in your genealogy research that don't quite fit, but you're certain they're connected? That's the case for me with my **James Crawford research**.

Over the years, I've uncovered records for multiple James Crawfords, but three stand out. These men lived in overlapping places and time periods, and I'm convinced they're related—yet explaining the reasoning behind that belief is challenging. The documents are there, but pulling all the connections together into something coherent can be overwhelming.

That's when I decided to turn to **ChatGPT** for help.

I uploaded three narrative reports from my RootsMagic file. Each included two to three generations of context:

- **Rebekah Douglas**, mother of James, Sally, and Mary Crawford
- **John Anderson**, father of Rebecca Anderson, who married one of the James Crawfords
- And finally, **James Crawford**, my own ancestor, who married **Sally Smith Duggins**

I then asked ChatGPT the following:

> *Attached are three genealogy reports connected to three different James Crawford families. These three family groups are interconnected. Can you not only identify the family connections but also any common residences or interactions between James Crawford (wife Sally Smith Duggins), James Crawford (wife Martha Knight), and James Crawford (wife Rebecca Anderson)? Can you list those various connections?*

Below is the comprehensive response I received:

Identified James Crawford Families

1. **James Crawford (b. 1772) + Sally Smith (widow of Alexander Duggins)**
    - Lived in **Garrard County, KY** and later moved to **Preble County, OH**
    - Married in 1799 in Garrard County
    - Children include **Nelson G. Crawford**
2. **James Crawford (b. 1770) + Martha Knight**
    - Son of **John Crawford and Rebekah Douglas**
    - Lived in **Lincoln, Barren Co., KY**; later in **Preble Co., OH**, and finally in **Warren Co., IN**
    - Married Martha Knight in 1793 in Lincoln Co., KY
    - Children include **Elizabeth Jane, John D., William A., Sarah, Mary Polly, Nancy, Celinda, etc.**
3. **James Crawford (b. ~1758) + Rebecca Anderson (daughter of John Anderson and Ann Irwin)**
    - Lived in **Madison/Garrard Co., KY**, then **Jefferson Co., IN**
    - Bought and sold land near **Paint Lick Creek / Silver Creek** in KY
    - Children include **Anne, William, Isaac, James Maxwell, Elizabeth, Jane, Cynthia**

🔗 Documented Connections & Interactions

1. Shared Geography

- **Garrard County, KY**
    - All three families are documented there between 1790 and 1800.
    - James (Rebecca Anderson) owned land from the Anderson family estate and sold to Thomas Kennedy
    - James (Sally Smith) listed on 1800 Garrard tax rolls
    - James (Martha Knight) also connected via land from Rebekah Douglas's estate (Boons Mill/Sugar Creek) which ends up in **Garrard County** by 1804
- **Preble County, Ohio**
    - Both **James + Sally Smith** and **James + Martha Knight** migrated there and lived in **Washington Township**
    - Land transactions, tax records, and church affiliations overlap
    - **William A. Duggins (Sally Smith's son)** sold land to **Nelson G. Crawford (Sally Smith's son with James Crawford)** in Warren Co., IN
- **Warren County, Indiana**
    - Both **James (Martha)** and their children (e.g., William A. Crawford, John D. Crawford, Sarah Crawford Shankland) moved here
    - James (Martha) dies in Warren Co. in 1833
    - Children of both James (Martha) and James (Sally) intermarried or lived in close proximity

---

2. Land Transactions as Connection Points

- **James Crawford (Rebecca Anderson)** sold **200 acres on Silver Creek**—land inherited from the **Anderson family** in Garrard Co. KY
- **James Crawford (Martha Knight)** sold **land on Boons Mill/Sugar Creek** from his mother Rebekah Crawford (née Douglas), also in Garrard Co. KY
- **James Crawford (Sally Smith)** sold land in Preble Co. OH and his son **Nelson G. Crawford** interacted in land transactions with Duggins descendants

---

3. Church and Civic Records

- All three James Crawfords or their descendants:
    - Held public office (Justice of the Peace, County Commissioner)
    - Were affiliated with **Christian Church** or civic duties in **Preble Co., OH** and **Warren Co., IN**
    - Were listed on early tax rolls and censuses in overlapping townships

---

🧬 yDNA Hint

- **James Crawford (Martha Knight)** and **James Crawford (Rebecca Anderson)** share the **R-Y88686 haplogroup**
- Suggests they may descend from the same paternal Crawford line

---

🗂️ Summary of Key Connections

Link Type	Between	Evidence
Location (KY)	All 3 Crawfords in **Garrard Co., KY**	Tax, land, and marriage records
Location (OH)	James + Sally and James + Martha in **Preble Co.**	Census and land records
Location (IN)	Children of both groups in **Warren Co., IN**	Land and church records
Inter-family Sales	William A. Duggins → Nelson G. Crawford	Preble Co. land deed
Land Origins	Rebecca Anderson’s inheritance overlaps Paint Lick	Inherited from John Anderson
DNA Match	James (Martha) & James (Rebecca) share yDNA	

Realizing that my prompt did not ask ChatGPT to include connections to the SELLERS family, I asked it to redo the analysis and provide details about those connections.

> Can you redo it and include the SELLERS families in the connections to the three Crawford lines?

And ChatGPT provided more information about the connections.

ChatGPT said:

Thank you! Here’s a revised and expanded version of the **connections among the three James Crawford families**, now **including the Sellers families**.

🧬 Interconnected Families: Crawford & Sellers

🧭 The Three Crawford Families:

1. **James Crawford (1772–1854)** married **Sally (Smith) Duggins**
2. **James Crawford (1770–1833)** married **Martha Knight**
3. **James Crawford (1758–1836)** married **Rebecca Anderson**

🔗 Key Connections Between Crawfords and Sellers Families

Connection Type	Crawford Involved	Sellers Family	Details	Source
Marriage Bond	James Crawford + Sally Smith	**James Sellers**	Signed the 1799 marriage bond in Garrard Co., KY	
Land Transaction	James Crawford Jr. (Sally's husband)	**William Sellers**	Sold land to William Sellers on 11 Dec 1821 in Preble Co., OH	
Reverse Transaction	James Crawford Jr.	William Sellers	Same day, Sellers sold adjoining parcel back to Crawford	
Land Patent Co-Ownership	James Crawford + William Sellers	—	Joint land patent for NW¼ S14 T7 R2E in Ohio	
Child Named After Sellers	James Crawford (Martha Knight)	—	Named son **James Sellers Crawford**, b. 1810 in Eaton, OH	
Crawford-Sellers Marriage	Mary Crawford (sister of James b. 1770)	**James Sellers**	Married 1791 in Lincoln Co., KY	
Daughter of James & Mary Sellers	Rebecca Sellers	Married **John Finley Seller**	Multiple land records and residence in Putnam Co., IN	
Witness on Deeds	Nathan D. Sellers	James Crawford (Sally)	Witness to 1821 land deeds between Crawfords and William Sellers	

🧩 Additional Observations

🏠 Shared Residences

- **Garrard County, KY**: All three Crawford men and the Sellers family were active in tax, land, and marriage records between 1790–1810.
- **Preble County, OH**: Both James (Sally) and James (Martha) lived in Preble County in the early 1800s, along with the Sellers family.
- **Putnam County, IN**: Descendants of both Crawford and Sellers families moved to this region and continued to

intermarry.

Name Clues

- Naming a child “James Sellers Crawford” suggests **close familial or personal ties** between James (Martha)’s family and James Sellers.

Legal and Land Transactions

- James (Sally) and William Sellers appear in **mutual land exchanges** in Preble Co., OH, in 1821.
- These exchanges occurred **on the same day**, likely related to settlement or redistribution of jointly patented land.

Summary of Family Ties

- **Mary Crawford**, sister of James Crawford (b. 1770), married **James Sellers**, making the Sellers family in-laws to that line.
- The **Sellers family is tied to the James + Sally line** via:
  - Land co-ownership
  - Marriage bond signing
  - Repeat interactions in Preble Co., OH
- **Naming of James Sellers Crawford** likely reflects these kinship ties.
- Multiple **shared locations** (Garrard, Preble, Putnam) suggest ongoing geographic proximity and community engagement.

My Analysis and Conclusion

As I reviewed ChatGPT’s summary, a few points stood out that deserve clarification or correction based on my own research:

- **Public Office Holders**: While it’s possible that *my* James Crawford (husband of Sally Smith) held public office, the records don’t provide clear confirmation. Mentions of civic duties in Preble County, Ohio appear to stop once James and Martha (née Knight) Crawford move to Indiana. This suggests that it was James married to Martha—not Sally—who held office in Preble County.
- **Intermarriage Between Lines**: The summary notes that children from the families of James and Sally Crawford and James and Martha Crawford intermarried. While the two lines did live in close proximity for multiple generations, I have not documented any intermarriages between their descendants.
- **Putnam County, Indiana**: Although the Sellers family had connections to Putnam County, Indiana, I found no mention of this location in the report for James and Sally Crawford. It would be inaccurate to suggest both families had ties there based solely on the Sellers side.
- **Land Transactions for James Crawford (Rebecca Anderson)**: The summary simplifies James’s land dealings by only referencing the sale of Anderson family land. However, he also had independent land activity in the area. Notably, in 1782 he filed a land entry on Sugar Creek and, in 1786, purchased 200 acres from Thomas Kennedy on Paint Lick Creek. These additional holdings add important context to his presence in Madison and Garrard Counties, Kentucky.

Final Thoughts

Overall, ChatGPT was remarkably helpful in synthesizing a large volume of genealogical information and highlighting patterns that can be difficult to see when buried in narrative reports. However, like any research tool, its results need to be reviewed critically. Some conclusions reflected assumptions rather than documentation.

That said, I’ve seen significant improvement—not only in my ability to craft precise prompts, but also in the quality of ChatGPT’s responses. As these tools continue to evolve, I believe they’ll become even more valuable for complex genealogical analysis.

ABC Biographies and WikiTree

By Marcia Crawford Philbrick
June 4, 2025
Artificial Intelligence,WikiTree
https://heartlandgenealogy.org/2025/06/04/abc-biographies-and-wikitree/

SHARING ON
WikiTree

As I continue learning how to use AI to help tell the stories of my ancestors, I'm also exploring the best ways to share those stories across various genealogy platforms. For my recent biography of Hugh Judson Crawford, I used ChatGPT to help transform a RootsMagic narrative into a more engaging life story. I then added that biography to the top of Hugh's RootsMagic narrative report and uploaded the updated PDF to his profile on FamilySearch, as well as to my Heartland Genealogy tree on Ancestry.

But when it came to sharing that same biography on WikiTree, I found myself unsure how to format it properly—especially since WikiTree uses its own special markup. So, I turned to ChatGPT once again and simply asked:

> **How can I share the above biography on WikiTree?**

And ChatGPT delivered. It provided detailed instructions, including WikiTree-specific formatting and markup, a shortened summary for the profile header, and even proper source attribution for both the blog and AI assistance.

> To share the biography of **Hugh Judson Crawford** on WikiTree, follow these steps to properly format and credit your work while respecting WikiTree's community guidelines:
>
> ---
>
> ## ✅ Step-by-Step: Posting the Biography on WikiTree

1. Log into WikiTree

Go to https://www.wikitree.com/ and sign in to your account.

2. Find or Create the Profile for Hugh Judson Crawford

- Search for an existing profile by entering his name in the search bar.
- If he doesn't already have a profile, create one using:
    - Full name: *Hugh Judson Crawford*
    - Birth: 16 Sep 1902, Dodge City, Kansas
    - Death: 7 Aug 1987, Casa Grande, Arizona

3. Edit the Biography Section

Click the **Edit** tab on his profile and scroll to the **Biography** section.

4. Paste the Biography Using WikiTree Style Guidelines

Use simple wiki markup to break the biography into sections. Here's a basic template using your content:

```
== Biography ==
''This biography was originally created for the Heartland Genealogy blog. Used
here with permission of the author.''

=== Early Life ===
Hugh Judson Crawford was born on 16 September 1902 in Dodge City, Kansas...
[continue with content]

=== Education ===
[Continue this section...]

=== Marriage and Family ===
[Continue...]

=== Military Service ===
[Continue...]

=== Later Years and Legacy ===
[Continue...]

== Sources ==
<ref>Crawford Family Bible, Crawford Family Papers, U.S. Census Records, U.S.
Navy Service Record compiled by Gladys Crawford, and various newspaper articles
cited in Heartland Genealogy (https://heartlandgenealogy.blogspot.com/)</ref>
```

You can use `== Heading ==` for main sections and `=== Subheading ===` for subsections. If you don't use tags for inline sources, you can list sources under a `== Sources ==` heading as bullet points.

📝 Tips for WikiTree Style

- Keep it factual and neutral.
- Include dates and locations.
- Avoid personal opinions or speculation.
- Credit **Heartland Genealogy blog** as the source and include a link.

📎 Optional: Add a Free-Space Profile

If the biography is too long or you want to share extra images and stories, consider creating a **Free-Space Profile** titled *Biography of Hugh Judson Crawford* and link it from his main profile.

Would you like me to create the WikiTree-formatted version (with markup tags) ready to paste in?

As the profile manager for Hugh Judson Crawford on WikiTree, I had already uploaded a detailed narrative report along with supporting sources. Since WikiTree doesn't allow multiple "Biography" sections, I needed to adjust the formatting to incorporate the version written by ChatGPT. I renamed the original Biography section to **Research Notes** and then pasted the wiki-markup biography provided by ChatGPT at the top of the profile.

ChatGPT's version included a brief list of sources, which created a duplication since I already had a full list of references further down the page. To resolve this, I renamed the ChatGPT section to **Brief Sources**, leaving the more comprehensive list under the standard **Sources** heading. I also updated the **Acknowledgements** section for clarity, noting that ChatGPT's content was based on the narrative report now placed in the Research Notes. To preserve context, I kept the Acknowledgements section positioned directly above the Research Notes.As the profile manager for Hugh Judson Crawford on WikiTree, I had already uploaded a detailed narrative report along with supporting sources. Since WikiTree doesn't allow multiple "Biography" sections, I needed to adjust the formatting to incorporate the version written by ChatGPT. I renamed the original Biography section to **Research Notes** and then pasted the wiki-markup biography provided by ChatGPT at the top of the profile.

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Conclusion

Working with ChatGPT to create and share a biography for Hugh Judson Crawford has not only helped me tell his story more clearly, but also taught me how to navigate the nuances of different genealogy platforms—especially WikiTree. By combining AI-generated narratives with the source-rich documentation I already maintain, I'm finding new ways to present my research in ways that are accessible, accurate, and engaging.

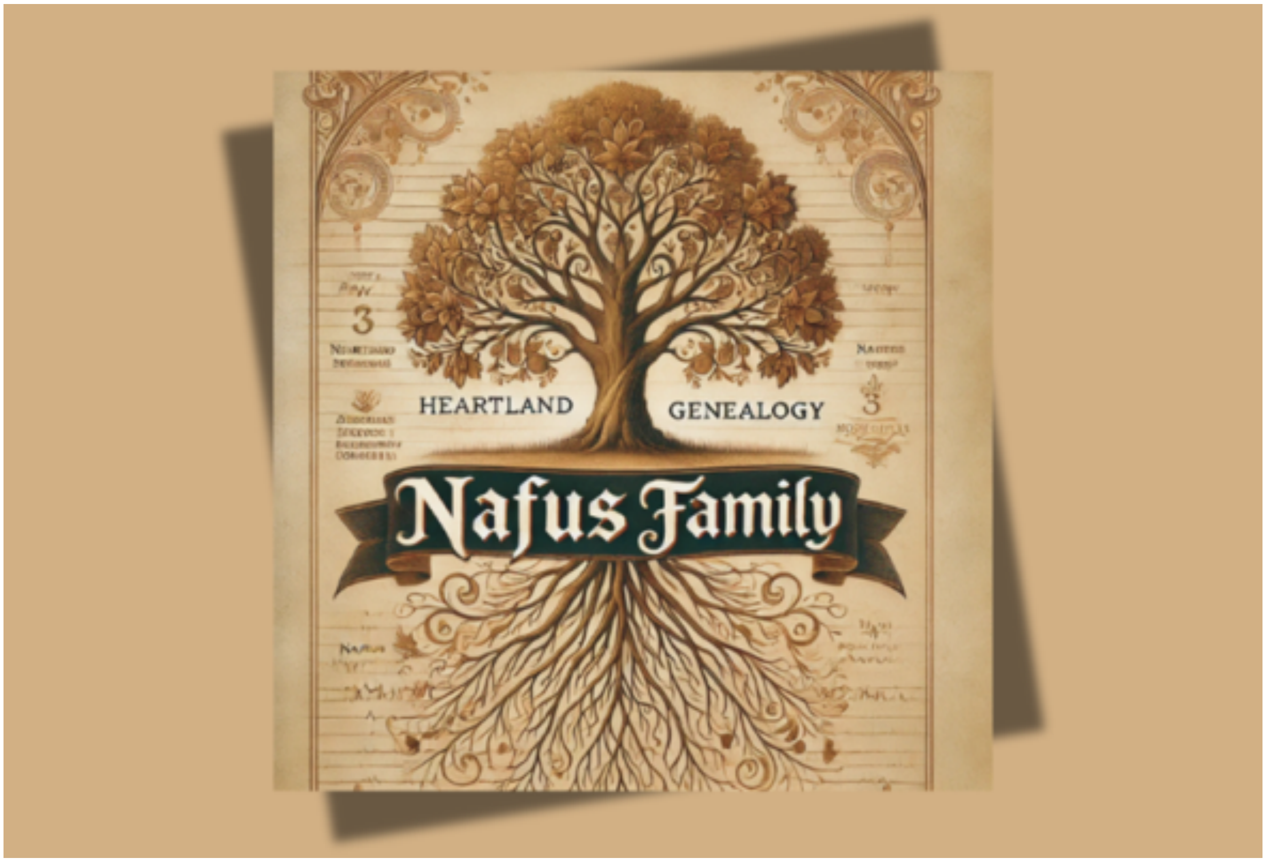
This process also reminded me that technology, when used thoughtfully, can be a powerful partner in preserving family history. Whether you're a seasoned WikiTreer or just beginning to explore how AI can support your genealogy work, don't be afraid to ask questions—even something as simple as "How do I do this?" can lead to surprisingly thorough and helpful answers.

Have you used AI tools to help document your ancestors? Or have you run into formatting challenges when publishing to sites like WikiTree? I'd love to hear about your experiences—drop a comment below or connect with me on Heartland Genealogy!

Be sure to check out Hugh Judson Crawford's updated profile on WikiTree using the ABC Biography for Hugh Judson Crawford.

Rethinking the Origins of William S. Nafus: England or Early New York?

By Marcia Crawford Philbrick
June 5, 2025
Uncategorized
https://heartlandgenealogy.org/2025/06/05/rethinking-the-origins-of-william-s-nafus-england-or-early-new-york/



Nafus Family on Heartland Genealogy

When Sources Mislead: The Case of William S. Nafus

If you're like me, you build your family tree on sources. But what happens when those sources provide misleading or even contradictory information?

As I've been researching the descendants of my 4th great-grandfather, **William S. Nafus (1774–1852)**, I discovered that I had recorded his birth as occurring in England, with an immigration date of 1781. This detail didn't come from just one source—it came from two.

Two Biographies, One Storyline: Born in England

The first mention comes from an 1897 biographical sketch about William's son, **A.W. Nafus**, through William's second wife, Mary Clabaugh. This account clearly states that William was born in England and came to America in 1781:

> *"William Nafus, his father, was a native of England, born in 1774, came to America in 1781, and died about 1852. He settled upon a farm in Wyandot County, Ohio…"*
> *— Commemorative Historical and Biographical Record of Wood County, Ohio* (Chicago: J. H. Beers & Co,

> 1897), pp. 1222–1223. Archive.org

A second biography, published over a century later in 1998, echoes this same origin story:

> *"William Nafus (1774) was a native of England and came to America in 1781…"*
> — *Seneca County Ohio History & Families*, Turner Publishing, p. 323. Submitted by Trevor Graham. Seneca County Digital Library

Both biographies are confident in their claims. And until recently, so was I.

But the Census Tells a Different Story

Eventually, I asked myself: *Why am I accepting this England narrative without question?*

The 1850 U.S. Census—one of the most contemporaneous documents we have—lists William S. Nafus as born in **New York**. This conflicts directly with the "born in England" narrative.

Land records support the census: William owned property in New York before migrating to Ohio. That fact, combined with his family's proximity to other New York settlers, adds weight to the idea that he was native to New York—not an English immigrant.

DNA and Colonial Ties: A Different Heritage Emerges

According to collaborative trees on FamilySearch and Geneanet, **William S. Nafus** descends from **Cornelius Nefjes (1744–1817)** and further back to **Johannes Nevius III**, part of a well-documented Dutch lineage from New Amsterdam.

The book *Joannes Nevius, Schepen and Third Secretary of New Amsterdam* tracks descendants of Johannes Nevius III down to Cornelius Nefjes but does not list Cornelius's children—leaving a gap where William might belong.

Despite this, **AncestryDNA ThruLines** connects me to Cornelius Nefjes as a 5th great-grandfather, offering genetic support to the idea that William S. Nafus descended from early Dutch settlers, not recent English immigrants.

There's even a WikiTree profile for **Cornelius "Nephew"**, who may have been William's brother. But so far, no definitive documentation links William to any siblings or parents.

The Gap Between Paper and Proof

At this time, there's no known FamilyTreeDNA or GEDmatch project confirming this Nafus/Nevius line. And without solid records connecting William to Cornelius, the paper trail remains incomplete.

Still, when weighing the evidence:

- ✅ **Census records say New York**
- ✅ **Land ownership points to New York**
- ✅ **DNA suggests Dutch colonial roots**
- ❌ **Biographies written decades after William's death say England**

The balance tips strongly away from the England origin story.

Conclusion: A Reminder to Revisit Assumptions

This case illustrates why we must question even long-held beliefs if they rest on shaky ground. While two published biographies insist that **William S. Nafus** came from England, both the **1850 census** and **DNA evidence** point to New York and a deep colonial heritage.

It’s a reminder to all genealogists: No matter how many times a story is told, we owe it to our ancestors—and ourselves—to dig deeper.

If you descend from the **Nafus / Nevius / Nefjes** line, I’d love to compare notes and DNA connections. Leave a comment or contact me through *Heartland Genealogy*.

Friday Find: Mentzer Obituary Clipping

By Marcia Crawford Philbrick
June 6, 2025
Mentzer
https://heartlandgenealogy.org/2025/06/06/friday-find-mentzer-obituary-clipping/

FRIDAY FINDS
FRIDAY FINDS
HEARTLAND GENEALOGY BLOG

Do you have newspaper obituary clippings tucked away in your files? While I usually save images of obituaries, my grandmother had the habit of clipping and preserving the originals. Today's discovery is one of those treasured keepsakes.

The clipping is for **Wilfred Francis Mentzer**, son of **John and Anna (Wells) Mentzer**. Born in **Woodson County, Kansas in 1903**, Wilfred—often known as Fred—had relocated to **Los Angeles County, California** by 1930, where he would spend the rest of his life.

A brief obituary for Wilfred Mentzer appeared in the **May 8, 1972** edition of *The Los Angeles Times*:

> *Mentzer, Wilfred F., 69 years, of Rosemead, loving husband of Clara, father of Mrs. Melba Bartlett of West Covina and Kenneth Mentzer of Canoga Park, 6 grandchildren, 1 brother and 5 sisters. Funeral services Tuesday, 2:30 p.m., Hillside Church. Rose Hills Memorial Park. Risher, Montebello Mortuary, directors.*

The obituary saved by my grandmother is much longer and more detailed. It reads as though it was composed in California rather than Kansas, which raises an intriguing question: **How did my grandmother come to have this more comprehensive version?**

Below is a full transcription of the clipping she preserved.

> **Wilfred F. Mentzer Laid To Rest Tues.**

Funeral services for Wilfred F. Mentzer were held Tuesday, May 9 at Hillside Church at 2:30 p.m. Rev. Loren Hancock officiated, with Risher Montebello Mortuary acting as directors. Interment followed in Rose Hills Memorial Park Cemetery. Mr. Mentzer, a native of Yates Center, Kansas, died in a local hospital May 6, after a short illness, at age 69 years. He had lived in this area the past 40 years. Mr. Mentzer was retired superintendent of Evergreen Cemetery, Los Angeles, where he had been employed for 40 years. He was a 4-H leader in Montebello for many years.

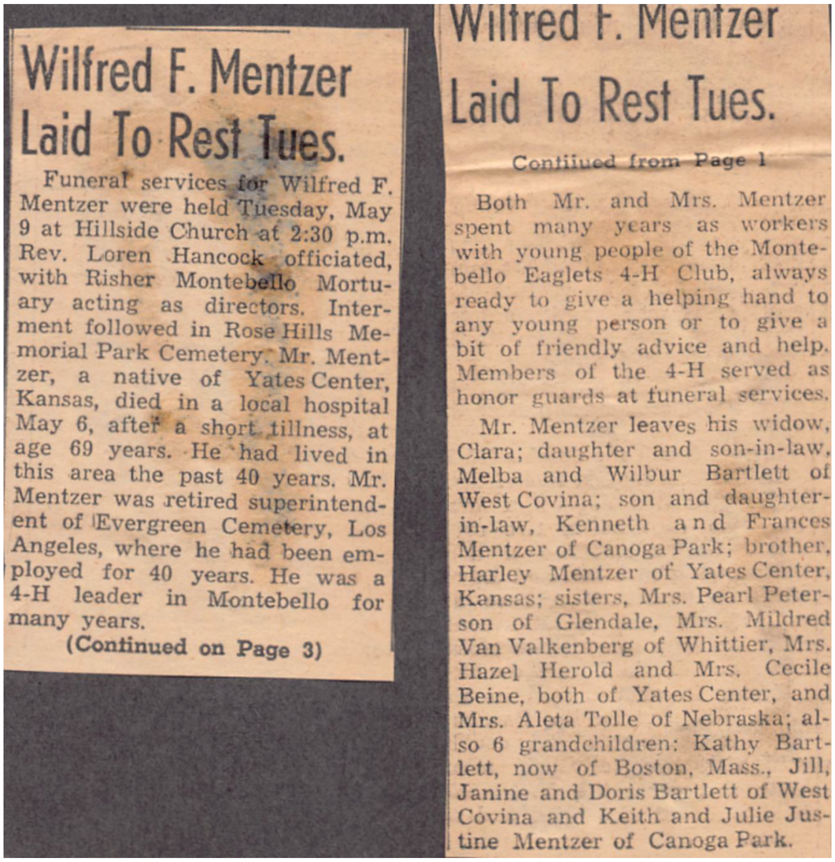
(Continued on Page 3)

Wilfred F. Mentzer Laid To Rest Tues.

(Continued from Page 1)

Both Mr. and Mrs. Mentzer spent many years as workers with young people of the Montebello Eaglets 4-H Club, always ready to give a helping hand to any young person or to give a bit of friendly advice and help. Members of the 4-H served as honor guards at funeral services.

Mr. Mentzer leaves his widow, Clara; daughter and son-in-law, Melba and Wilbur Bartlett of West Covina; son and daughter-in-law, Kenneth and Frances Mentzer of Canoga Park; brother, Harley Mentzer of Yates Center, Kansas; sisters, Mrs. Pearl Peterson of Glendale, Mrs. Mildred Van Valkenberg of Whittier, Mrs. Hazel Herold and Mrs. Cecil Beine, both of Yates Center, and Mrs. Aleta Tolle of Nebraska; also 6 grandchildren: Kathy Bartlett, now of Boston, Mass., Janine and Doris Bartlett of West Covina and Keith and Julie Justine Mentzer of Canoga Park.



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I'm deeply grateful to my grandmother for her foresight in saving newspaper clippings like this one. Without her care and attention, this richer, more personal account of Wilfred Mentzer's life and legacy might have been lost to time. Her quiet habit of preservation continues to connect generations—and reminds me why we do the work of family history in the first place.

ABC Overview: Hugh Judson Crawford

By Marcia Crawford Philbrick
June 7, 2025
Artificial Intelligence,Crawford
https://heartlandgenealogy.org/2025/06/07/abc-overview-hugh-judson-crawford/

HEARTLAND
GENEALOGY
CRAWFORD
FAMILY

Continuing the ABC process, I submitted a RootsMagic narrative report for Hugh Judson Crawford to GoogleNotebookLM and asked it to create an audio overview. Below is that overview of Hugh's life based as created by AI technology.

https://youtube.com/watch?v=6q7bducZvuQ

HUGH JUDSON CRAWFORD
1902-1987
Married in 1929
GLADYS
EPHINE
VANDERWILT
1908-2004

Saturday Night Genealogy Fun

By Marcia Crawford Philbrick
June 8, 2025
SaturdayNightGenealogyFun
https://heartlandgenealogy.org/2025/06/08/saturday-night-genealogy-fun-159/

Calling all Genea-Musings Fans:

It's Saturday Night again –

Time for some more Genealogy Fun!!

Your mission, should you decide to accept it (cue the Mission Impossible! music) is to:

1) What was your favorite genealogy learning experience this past month? In-person program? Online webinar? YouTube video? Blog post? Social media item? Family history story?

This was a tough question! As someone who learns best through the written word, I try to scan my Feedly and Facebook feeds daily for new blog posts, articles, and genealogy insights. While I can't point to a specific post from the past month that directly impacted my personal research, one earlier post continues to inspire and shape my work in exciting ways.

Randy Seaver's April 5th blog post, *Using Artificial Intelligence in the Ancestor Biography Creation (ABC) Process*, has had a significant and lasting impact—not only on my genealogy work but also on the projects I support for our local historical society.

Following Randy's approach, I've been creating ancestor biographies enhanced with AI tools—and I've even branched into audio summaries and songs. These overviews, created using **Google NotebookLM**, allow me to distill research into short, conversational audio files that are easy to share and deeply engaging.

When I shared the overview I made for my Revolutionary War ancestor **Oliver Miles** with my husband, his immediate reaction was, *"We need to do this for the Nemaha County military personnel we're researching."* That encouragement pushed me to think beyond individual family history and toward broader community storytelling.

I recently presented another AI-generated overview about **Dorothy Swart Tatum**, a World War II WAC, to our historical society board. Inspired by that example, a fellow board member used an old audio interview about **Seneca's hand-dug well** to generate an overview. Now, we're hoping to involve students in adding images and video to bring the story to life as a dynamic short film for visitors.

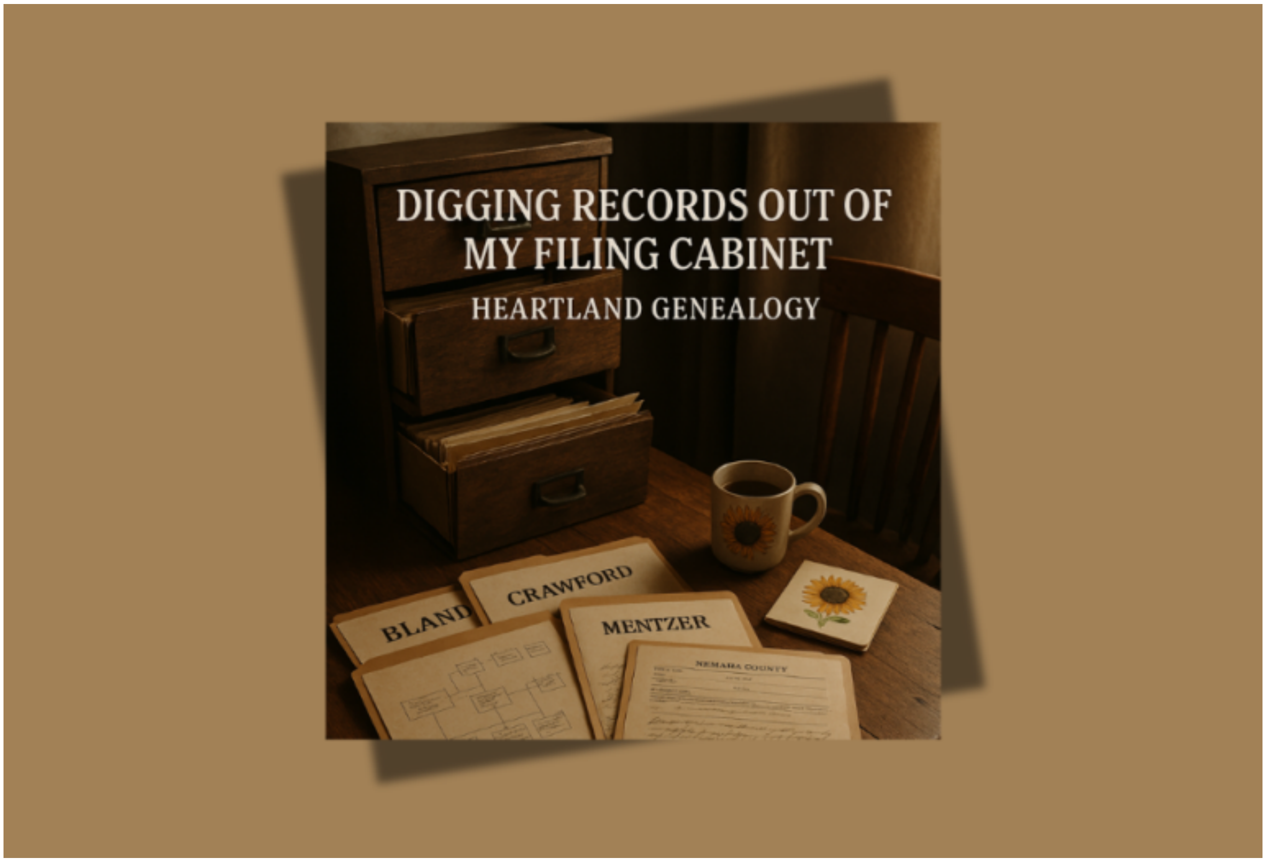
https://youtube.com/watch?v=F9aAFulzXhY

WORLD'S SECOND LARGEST HAND DUG WELL
SENECA, KANSAS

Thanks to this single blog post, I've begun transforming static historical facts into compelling narratives—something that resonates far beyond genealogy charts. It's been one of the most energizing learning experiences I've had in months.

Monday’s Diggings

By Marcia Crawford Philbrick
June 9, 2025
Briles
https://heartlandgenealogy.org/2025/06/09/mondays-diggings-3/



Today’s find from my genealogy files is a heartfelt letter from Ysleta Bradshaw, a fellow researcher and distant cousin, writing about our shared BRILES ancestry.

> **Mar. 2, 1985**
> Ysleta Bradshaw
> 2204 Robta Cut Off Rd
> Ft. Worth TX 76114
>
> **Re: Briles Family**
>
> **Dear Marcia,**
>
> I am looking at a letter you sent me last year, and I would like to say “thanks” for one of the **most important** letters I have received in my 20 years of working on genealogy. As I work, I cannot devote as much time to genealogy research as I would like. My husband’s, Mary Briles married Henry Young who came to Texas after 1850. Mary’s parents (per your wonderful letter) were John Briles & Nancy Beckerdite. You listed John’s children , spouses an birth dates. You also offered to send me a copy of the genealogy. I will appreciate anything you can send me and will be more than happy to pay for copies and postage. I cannot find out anything about Raush (Rush) Blankenbaker’s, Beckerdite (and I have really tried).
>
> I usually enclose a copy of my lines when writing someone.If I didn’t let me know and I—

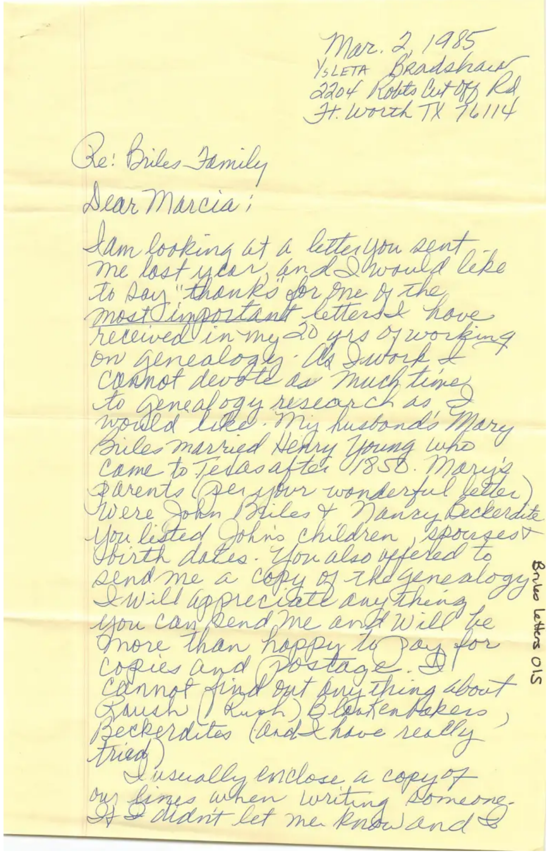
Page 2

Mar. 2, 1985
Page 2
Ysleta Bradshaw
2204 Robta Cut Off Rd
Ft. Worth TX 76114

Will send you one.
My maiden name was Buchanan.
I am descendant of several Reuben (Carl, JEwel), Davis and Preston, Jesse B. Randolph Co. NC m. Eliz. “Betsy” Wright dau. Evan Wright, and Jonathan Mullanix of 1800 Randolph Co. NC d. Randolph Co. NC m. Susannah ?.

If I take this to work to type it will never get sent.
THANK YOU for everything.

Sincerely,
Ysleta Bradshaw



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YSLETA Bradshaw
2204 Robts Cut Off Rd
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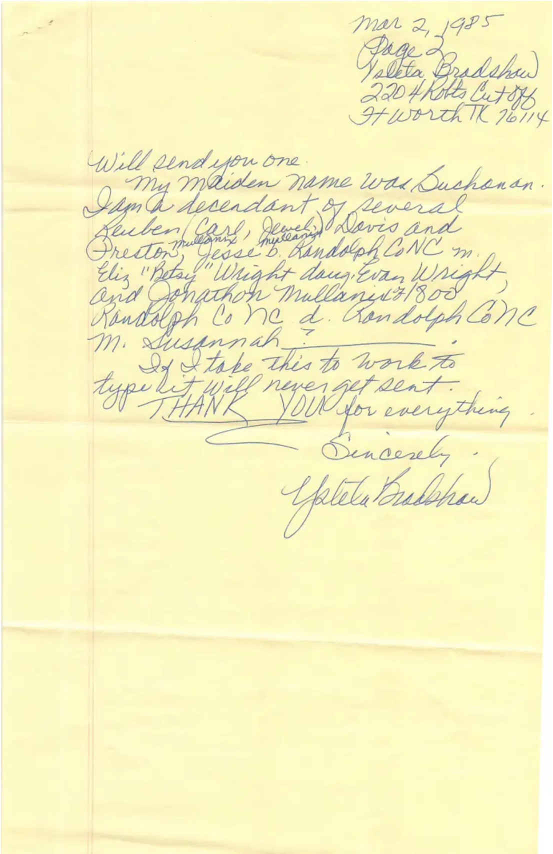
Briles letters 015



Mar 2, 1985
Page 2
Ysleta Bradshaw
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Will send you one.

My maiden name was Buchanan. I am a decendant of several Reuben (Carl, Jewel) Davis and Preston, mullanix mullanix Jesse b. Randolph Co NC m. Eliz "Betsy" Wright daug. Evan Wright, and Jonathon Mullanix ?1800 Randolph Co NC d. Randolph Co NC m. Susannah ?________.

If I take this to work to type it will never get sent.

THANK YOU for everything.

Sincerely.
Ysleta Bradshaw

Letters like this one from Ysleta Bradshaw are a treasure—filled with personal connections, research insights, and encouragement that remind us we're not alone in this journey. I'm grateful she took the time to share her lineage and enthusiasm, and her words continue to inspire my ongoing research into the Briles family. If you've received similar correspondence, consider revisiting and preserving it—you never know what valuable clues or connections it may hold.

Fresh Eyes on Old Records: An AI Tool Reveals a Hidden Mistake

By Marcia Crawford Philbrick
June 10, 2025
Crawford,Duggins
https://heartlandgenealogy.org/2025/06/10/fresh-eyes-on-old-records-an-ai-tool-reveals-a-hidden-mistake/

HEARTLAND GENEALOGY
AI
AI
HEARTLAND GENEALOGY

How big is your family tree? Do you track descendants, collateral lines, or even build out the full FAN club—friends, associates, and neighbors? If you answered "yes," chances are your genealogy file is vast and complex. Like many researchers, I've worked hard to document my findings—but that documentation spans many years, which means the quality and accuracy can vary. Some sources are solid; others… not so much.

So how do we spot the weaker links in our research? As I've been exploring AI tools, I recently turned to **Google NotebookLM** to create audio overviews of key ancestors. One such overview—for **Sally Smith Duggins Crawford**—unexpectedly pointed out a few discrepancies that led me to re-evaluate parts of my tree.

For instance, the overview implied that Sally's first husband, **Alexander Duggins**, was still alive when she married her second husband, **James Crawford**, in 1799. That raised a red flag. A quick check of my records revealed a tax record from 1796 placing Alexander Duggins in **Madison County, Kentucky**—three years before Sally's remarriage in neighboring Garrard County. While that record confirms the Duggins family was in Madison County in 1796, it does *not* prove Alexander was alive at the time of Sally's second marriage.

The AI tool also mentioned a **1794 deed** in **Amherst County, Virginia** involving land sold by Alexander Duggins. Curious, I pulled the record. It was, indeed, a sale by someone named Alexander Duggins—but there was no mention of a wife, and no signature from Sally Duggins. Since Sally and Alexander were married in 1788, this suggests the 1794 deed likely involves a *different* Alexander Duggins altogether.

Without the AI-generated audio overview from Google NotebookLM, I might never have questioned the land record or noticed the inconsistencies in my file. This experience reminded me just how valuable it can be to revisit our research with fresh eyes—or in this case, fresh ears. Tools like NotebookLM aren't just for summaries—they can help us uncover overlooked details, challenge old assumptions, and ultimately strengthen the accuracy of our family trees. If you haven't tried creating an audio overview for one of your ancestors, I highly recommend giving it a go—you might be surprised at what you discover.

Cornelius Nephew Will

By Marcia Crawford Philbrick
June 11, 2025
[Uncategorized]
https://heartlandgenealogy.org/2025/06/11/cornelius-nephew-will/

HEARTLAND
GENEALOGY
Nafus Family

Nafus Family on Heartland Genealogy

Which Cornelius Nafus? Tracing a Will Across Generations

Do you ever get confused about which family a particular record belongs to? That's been my recent challenge with some Nafus research. Not only is the surname spelled in numerous ways—Nafus, Nephus, Nephew, Neafus, Nefjes—but it seems nearly every branch of the family had a **Cornelius**. So when I found an 1850 newspaper notice involving the will of a *Cornelius Nafus*, I initially assumed it referred to a younger man—not my ancestor, Cornelius Nafus (1750–1817), who was married to Jane Skelton.

Here's the legal notice that caught my attention:

> **NOTICE.**
> TO William Nafus, Cornelius Nafus, Jonathan Nafus, John Nafus, Joel Hale, and Sarah Hale, his wife, late Sarah Nafus, and Jane Nafus, Legatees under the Will of Cornelius Nafus, late of Luzerne county, deceased, and the heirs and legal representatives of the above named legatees.
> Take notice—That on fourth Nov. 1850,—the petition of John Williams was presented to the Court of Common Pleas of Luzerne county, setting forth that the legatees under the Will of Cornelius Nafus, dec'd, were all paid, and praying the said Court, to order satisfaction to be entered thereon. Whereupon the said Court on motion, order and direct, that notice of said petition and application be served by the Sheriff, by public notice in one Newspaper in the county of Luzerne, once a week for four weeks successively, prior to next Term, said notice to be directed to the legatees named in the petition, generally, without name to their

> heirs and legal representatives.
> In compliance with said order of Court, notice is hereby given.
> **G. W. PALMER,**
> Sheriff of Luzerne county.
> *Nov. 27, 1850*
> *The Luzerne Union* (Wilkes-Barre, PA), 4 Dec 1850, p. 3, via Newspapers.com

This prompted a search on FamilySearch, where I found a promising connection: Joel Hale's wife, **Sarah Nafus**, was listed as a daughter of Cornelius Nafus (1750–1817) and Jane Skelton. But if Cornelius died in 1817, why was this notice being published in 1850—over thirty years later?

To investigate, I searched Luzerne County records and located what appears to be the **original will** of Cornelius—recorded in **1815**:

> **Will of Cornelius Nephus – Dated 9 May 1815, Recorded 25 Aug 1841**
> *Will Book B, 1821–1854, p. 292 (image 162 of 308), Luzerne County, Pennsylvania*
>
> In the name of God Amen. I Cornelius Nephus of Pittston in the County of Luzerne and State of Pennsylvania, being weak in body but of sound mind and memory…
>
> I will and bequeath to Isaac Nephus and George Nephus my sons, all my land of both lots, to be equally divided between them…
>
> I will and bequeath to William my son thirty-five dollars… to Cornelius my son thirty-five dollars… to Jonathan my son thirty-five dollars… to Sarah my daughter thirty-five dollars…
>
> My daughter Jane is to have her bedding and bureau, one cow, and thirty-five dollars…
>
> I will and bequeath to my son John thirty-five dollars to be paid to his heirs when my grandson **Marcene J. Nephew** comes of age… the remainder to be paid to the widow and daughter of John Nephew deceased…
>
> George Nephew is to have the care and bringing up of Marcene J. Nephew and schooling until he is fit to go to a trade…
>
> And lastly, I hereby appoint George and Isaac Nephew Executors of my last Will and Testament.

An additional note—entered in the court record on **7 January 1851**—stated:

> *In proceedings in the Court of Common Pleas of Luzerne County… the Court directs that Satisfaction of the Legacies under this will shall be entered upon the Record… which is accordingly done.*

This clearly links the **1850 newspaper notice** with the **1815 will** of Cornelius Nephus—despite the 30+ year gap. But it also opens up several questions for future research.

Family Members Named in the 1815 Will:

Sons:

- **Isaac Nephus** – Inherited half of land and fishery; executor
- **George Nephus** – Inherited other half; executor and guardian of Marcene J.
- **William Nephus** – $35 legacy
- **Cornelius Nephus** – $35 legacy
- **Jonathan Nephus** – $35 legacy
- **John Nephus (deceased)** – $35 legacy divided among his heirs:
    - **Marcene J. Nephew** (grandson) – to receive payment upon coming of age
    - **Unnamed widow and daughter** – to share remainder

Daughters:

- **Sarah Nephus** – $35 legacy
- **Jane Nephus** – Bedding, bureau, one cow, $35, and half the household furniture

Genealogical Clues and Challenges

Using **Marcene J. Nephew** as a clue, I again turned to FamilySearch. I located a **Marcena J. Nephew**, son of **John Neafus**, with grandparents listed as **Cornelius and Jane (Skelton) Nefjes**—a promising match. But this raised another issue: FamilySearch listed John's death around **1850**, while the **1815 will** clearly states that John was already **deceased** by then. This discrepancy may be due to confusion over probate or later mentions of John's estate.

Another oddity is the listing of **both Jonathan and John** as sons—distinct individuals with very similar names, which could easily lead to misattribution in trees.

Unanswered Questions:

- Why did it take **over 30 years** for the legacies of this will to be formally satisfied?
- Is this **Cornelius Nephus** definitely the one married to **Jane Skelton**?
- Could the delay relate to real estate disputes, heirship clarification, or lack of probate enforcement?

Conclusion

Despite the 1850 newspaper notice initially seeming unrelated to Cornelius Nafus (1750–1817), deeper analysis shows it **does** connect back to his 1815 will. Still, the surname variations, repeated given names, and long probate timeline illustrate how easily genealogical trails can go cold—or be misleading.

This case reminds us to be cautious, thorough, and persistent. What starts as a confusing name in a newspaper notice might eventually illuminate a full family network—if we take the time to connect the dots.

Culver Will

By Marcia Crawford Philbrick
June 12, 2025
Nafus
https://heartlandgenealogy.org/2025/06/12/culver-will/

HEARTLAND
GENEALOGY
Nafus Family

Nafus Family on Heartland Genealogy

Was It Just a Signature—Or a Family Clue?

Have you ever paused to wonder why one of your relatives witnessed a specific will? Was it simply a neighborly duty—or something more? That's the question I asked myself while researching my ancestor William S. Nafus.

In the process, I came across an 1829 will from Seneca County, Ohio, witnessed by both Wm. S. Nafus and Cornelius Nafus. While the will itself—belonging to David Culver—didn't reveal any direct ties to the Nafus family, it may hold a clue to another branch of my tree: the family of William's wife, Salome Carpenter.

The will names David Culver's three sons—Chester, David, and Carpenter—and a daughter, Diana. Although I haven't been able to find this exact family unit on the FamilySearch tree, several Ancestry trees list Frances Carpenter as the wife of David Culver. That surname immediately caught my attention.

Could Frances Carpenter be related to my Salome Carpenter? Could William S. Nafus have been present at the signing of this will because David Culver was his brother-in-law?

It's still just a theory—but an intriguing one. I've reached out to the owners of those Ancestry trees in hopes that someone might have additional documentation to confirm or refute the connection.

Below is a full transcription of the 1829 will of David Culver of Seneca County, Ohio. Maybe you'll spot something I missed.

> “Seneca, Ohio, United States records,” images, FamilySearch (https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QS7-89QK-X96S?view=explore : May 26, 2025), image 184 of 696; Ohio. County Court (Seneca County). Image Group Number: 005865712
>
> Vol. 1 1828-1849 (starts on image 152)
>
> page 3
>
> The Last Will and Testament of David Culver deceased produce
> ed at a Court of Common Pleas begun and hold at the Court house
> in Tiffen in and for the County of Seneca and State of Ohio on the
> third day of November in the year of our Lord one thousand
> eight hundred and twenty – nine and proven by the testimony
> of William S. Nafus and Cornelius Nafus the subscribing wit
> nesses to the same – approved by the Court and ordered to
> be Recorded
> In the name of God , Amen : – I , David Culver of Seneca County
> and State of Ohio , being weak in body but of a sound perfect mind and
> memory , considering the uncertainty of this mortal life and
> being of sound and perfect mind and memory , blessed be al
> mighty God for the same , do make and publish this my
> last will and testament in manner and form following (that
> is to say) First : I give and bequeath unto my beloved wife Fran
> ces Culver all my farming utensils and all my household fur
> niture and one third of all my real estate that is to say , all my
> lands and truements , (that is) First all my legal debts and
> charges to be paid out of my estate – I do also give and bequeath
> to my Eldest son Chester Culver , his heirs and assigns all my
> messuage lands and truements , situate , lying and being in the
> County of Seneca and State of Ohio , in township one in Range four
> teen in section thirty – four being the South – west quarter of said
> Section , containing one hundred and twelve acres , north of the Base
> Line – provided that the said Son Chester Culver shall demean and
> conduct himself well towards his Mother , and shall continue with
> her and occupy the aforesaid farm in order to raise and maintain the family
> say his mother , Brother and Sister , and when my youngest
> son Carpenter Culver arrives to the age of twenty one years , all
> the aforesaid , shall be appraised with all its appurtenances there
> to belonging , and if my two sons , David Culver and Carpenter
> Culver continues with my Eldest Son Chester Culver and
> helps the said Chester Culver to occupy and labour on said farm co
> equal then my sons , David Culver and Carpenter Culver I will
> they shall have each one a third of the aforesaid appraisal to be
> paid by my Eldest son Chester Culver in two years after the afore
> said appraisement is done – and if the aforesaid son Chester Culver
> declines to comply with the aforesaid conditions then in that case
> the said Chester Culver shall submit to one of his brothers to ac
> cept of said proposals either of them that enclines so to do , But
> if my sons David Culver and Carpenter Culver shall be dis
> obedient and not complying with my request , as to stating
> together as a family and laboring mutually to gether then
> in that case they shall be cut short of the foregoing proposals and
>
> page 4

receive one hundred dollars , only – or if either of them is dis
obedient and not complying with my request , that one shall be cut
short of his equal share and receive only one hundred dollars to
be paid in two years after the appraisement of the aforesaid farm
and the other to receive his equal share according to the first proposals ,
or if my Eldest son Chester Culver should be disobedient and not at
tend to the occupying of the aforesaid farm , to help keep the family togeth
er he shall forfeit his right to the first proposals and receive but one
hundred dollars at the expiration of two years from the aforesaid ap
praisement of said farm , or any or all of them complying with above
requisitions shall have their apportionment as first above stated –
I do also give and bequeath to my only daughter Diana one comand
bed and bedding with such things as is reasonable for the beginning
of Housekeeping – And lastly as to all the rest , residue and remain
der of my personal estate , goods and chattles of what kind and
nature soever I give and bequeath the same to my said beloved wife
Frances Culver whom I appoint my Executrix and John Tingler my
Executor of this my last Will and testament , hereby revoking all for
mer Wills by me made .
In Witness whereof , I have hereunto set my hand and seal the ninth
day of September in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred
and twenty – nine
David Culver Ⓟ
Signed sealed published and declared
by the above David Culver to be his last Will and
testament , in the presence of us who have hereunto
subscribed our names as witnesses in the presence
of the testator David Culver
Wm B. Nafus
Cornelius Nafus
N. B. all raseing and interlining was done before signing .
And the proof of the foregoing Will , as taken by said Court , on the
date last aforesaid , reads in words and figures following to – wit :
Last Will and testament of David Culver deceased – Personally
came into open Court William S. Nafus and Cornelius Nafus .
the subscribing witnesses to a paper purporting to be the last Will
and testament of David Culver deceased and now here pre
sented to them and being duly sworn in open Court respectively
say that they are the signing witnesses thereto , and that they
and each of them signed said paper at the request of the said
David Culver as witnesses in his presence and that he the said
Culver signed said will in their presence and declared it to
be his last will and testament , that at the time of such signing
the said David Culver was of full age of sound mind and mem
ory and under no restraint whatever .
Sworn to and subscribed in open Court
this 3 ” day of November AD 1829 }
Cornelius Naus
Wm S. Nafus
Joseph Howard Clerk Pro Tem
Recorded this Will to – gether with the proof thereof , January 4 AD |
1830 Attest . Joseph Howard Clerk 5 Caption

Friday Finds: Walter Beine Obituary

By Marcia Crawford Philbrick
June 13, 2025
Mentzer
https://heartlandgenealogy.org/2025/06/13/friday-finds-walter-beine-obituary/

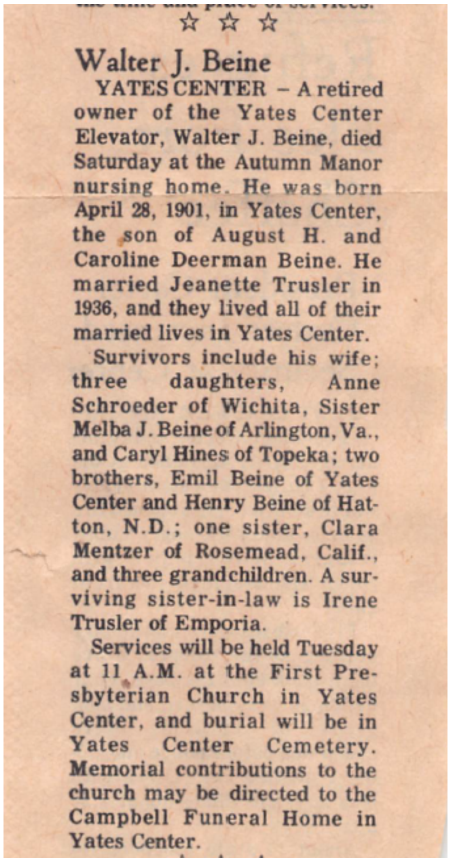
FRIDAY FINDS
FRIDAY FINDS
HEARTLAND GENEALOGY BLOG

My grandmother was an avid "clipper," carefully saving newspaper articles related to family and community. Today's discovery is one of those clippings—an obituary for **Walter J. Beine** of Yates Center. While I haven't found a direct familial connection to Walter himself, his family ties link closely to mine. Walter's brother, **Emil Beine**, was married to **Cecil Mentzer**, a double cousin to my grandmother. Likewise, Walter's sister, **Clara Beine**, married **Wilfred Mentzer**, another of my grandmother's double cousins. Though Walter may not be a blood relative, this obituary helps confirm the spouses of two important family connections.

Below is the transcription of the obituary, provided with the help of ChatGPT.

> **Walter J. Beine**
> **YATES CENTER** – A retired owner of the Yates Center Elevator, Walter J. Beine, died Saturday at the Autumn Manor nursing home. He was born April 28, 1901, in Yates Center, the son of August H. and Caroline Deerman Beine. He married Jeanette Trusler in 1936, and they lived all of their married lives in Yates Center.
>
> Survivors include his wife; three daughters, Anne Schroeder of Wichita, Sister Melba J. Beine of Arlington, Va., and Caryl Hines of Topeka; two brothers, Emil Beine of Yates Center and Henry Beine of Hatton, N.D.; one sister, Clara Mentzer of Rosemead, Calif.; and three grandchildren. A surviving sister-in-law is Irene Trusler of Emporia.
>
> Services will be held Tuesday at 11 A.M. at the First Presbyterian Church in Yates Center, and burial will be

in Yates Center Cemetery. Memorial contributions to the church may be directed to the Campbell Funeral Home in Yates Center.



* * *

Walter J. Beine

YATES CENTER – A retired owner of the Yates Center Elevator, Walter J. Beine, died Saturday at the Autumn Manor nursing home. He was born April 28, 1901, in Yates Center, the son of August H. and Caroline Deerman Beine. He married Jeanette Trusler in 1936, and they lived all of their married lives in Yates Center.

Survivors include his wife; three daughters, Anne Schroeder of Wichita, Sister Melba J. Beine of Arlington, Va., and Caryl Hines of Topeka; two brothers, Emil Beine of Yates Center and Henry Beine of Hatton, N.D.; one sister, Clara Mentzer of Rosemead, Calif., and three grandchildren. A surviving sister-in-law is Irene Trusler of Emporia.

Services will be held Tuesday at 11 A.M. at the First Presbyterian Church in Yates Center, and burial will be in Yates Center Cemetery. Memorial contributions to the church may be directed to the Campbell Funeral Home in Yates Center.

Obituaries like this one remind us that even distant or indirect connections can provide valuable context for our family history. Thanks to my grandmother’s habit of clipping and saving, I now have a clearer picture of how the Beine and Mentzer families intertwined. Each detail helps strengthen the web of relationships that make up our shared past.

Celebrating the U.S. Army’s 250th Birthday

By Marcia Crawford Philbrick
June 14, 2025
Revolutionary_War
https://heartlandgenealogy.org/2025/06/14/celebrating-the-u-s-armys-250th-birthday/

IN CONGRESS July 4, 1776.
The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America
Revolutionary War
AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

Could Your Ancestor Have Been Among the First Soldiers?

Do you have ancestors who served in the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War? If so, they may have been part of what would become the **United States Army**, established during one of the most pivotal moments in American history.

Curious about how my own genealogy research might connect to the early days of the U.S. Army, I turned to ChatGPT to learn more.

🎉 The U.S. Army Turns 250 in June 2025

June 14, 2025, marks the **250th anniversary of the U.S. Army**, officially created by the **Second Continental Congress** on **June 14, 1775**, in **Philadelphia, Pennsylvania**.

📍 **Where It Was Formed:**

Carpenter’s Hall, Philadelphia

🛠️ **How It Was Formed:**

Facing growing conflict with British troops, Congress passed a resolution to:

> “Adopt the militia army already assembled outside Boston as the Continental Army”
> and
> “appoint a general to command it.”

The very next day—**June 15, 1775—George Washington** was appointed **Commander-in-Chief** of this new Continental Army.

At the time, thousands of colonial militia were already surrounding British-held Boston, having mobilized after the battles of **Lexington and Concord** (April 1775). With Congress’s action, those local militias became the first national army fighting for American independence.

🪖 Who Were the First Soldiers in the Continental Army?

When the army was formed, Congress essentially **adopted existing militias**, so the first soldiers were men who had already answered the call to defend their homes.

1. Massachusetts Militiamen

- **Colonel William Prescott** – Led troops at Bunker Hill
- **Colonel Israel Putnam** – Later promoted to major general
- **Colonel John Stark** – Commanded New Hampshire troops

2. Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Virginia

- **General Nathanael Greene** – Rhode Island officer who rose quickly
- **Colonel Benedict Arnold** – Led invasion into Canada
- **Captain Daniel Morgan –** Virginia rifleman known for tactics at Saratoga

3. Congressional Rifle Companies

On June 14, 1775, Congress also called for **10 rifle companies** from Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia. These were the first troops **raised directly by Congress**:

- **Captain Michael Cresap** (Maryland)
- **Captain Thomas Price** (Maryland)
- **Captain Daniel Morgan** (Virginia)

4. Washington’s Early Staff

- **General Charles Lee**
- **General Horatio Gates**
- **Adjutant General Joseph Reed**
- **Henry Knox**, who famously transported artillery from Fort Ticonderoga

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🔍 Exploring My Ancestor’s Role: Oliver Miles of Concord

That history made me wonder—**could my ancestor Oliver Miles have been among those earliest soldiers?** He lived in **Concord, Massachusetts**, and reportedly served under **Lieutenant Ephraim Wheeler** and **Colonel Eleazer Brooks**.

So, I asked:

> *Were these militia leaders part of the original U.S. Army?*

✅ Yes — With Clarification

Both Wheeler and Brooks were **Massachusetts militia leaders**. When the militia surrounding Boston was adopted into the Continental Army on **June 14, 1775**, they and their men—if still actively serving—became some of the **first soldiers in the U.S. Army**.

🧾 About These Men:

- **Colonel Eleazer Brooks (1727–1806)** – Commanded Massachusetts troops during the Siege of Boston; later became a Massachusetts legislator.
- **Lieutenant Ephraim Wheeler** – Appears in Revolutionary War rolls tied to Middlesex County units.

If Oliver Miles was in their company at that time, then he too became part of the Continental Army in its earliest days.

📜 Service Record: Oliver Miles, Minute Man?

While the term "minute man" is often used broadly, I wanted to verify Oliver's exact role. Here's what I discovered:

🪖 Confirmed Revolutionary War Service:

According to *Massachusetts Soldiers and Sailors of the Revolutionary War*, **Oliver Miles** served as a **private** in a **Concord company** under **Lt. Ephraim Wheeler** and **Col. Eleazer Brooks**. In **March 1776**, his unit marched to **Roxbury** to reinforce the Continental Army outside Boston. His official service lasted **six days**.

This service is also noted in a **Sons of the American Revolution (SAR)** application, which refers to Miles as a "minute man."

⏰ Earlier Service – French and Indian War:

Oliver Miles had earlier served in the **French and Indian War**. In **1757**, he was captured at the **Battle of Fort William Henry**, enduring **three months as a prisoner**. This earlier military experience likely influenced his Revolutionary service.

📚 Resources for Further Research

If you're researching an ancestor like Oliver Miles, check these sources:

- **Massachusetts State Archives** – Muster rolls and service records
- **FamilySearch.org** – Free Revolutionary War index cards
- **Ancestry.com** and **Fold3** – Service and pension files
- **Concord Free Public Library** – Local militia lists and town records

---

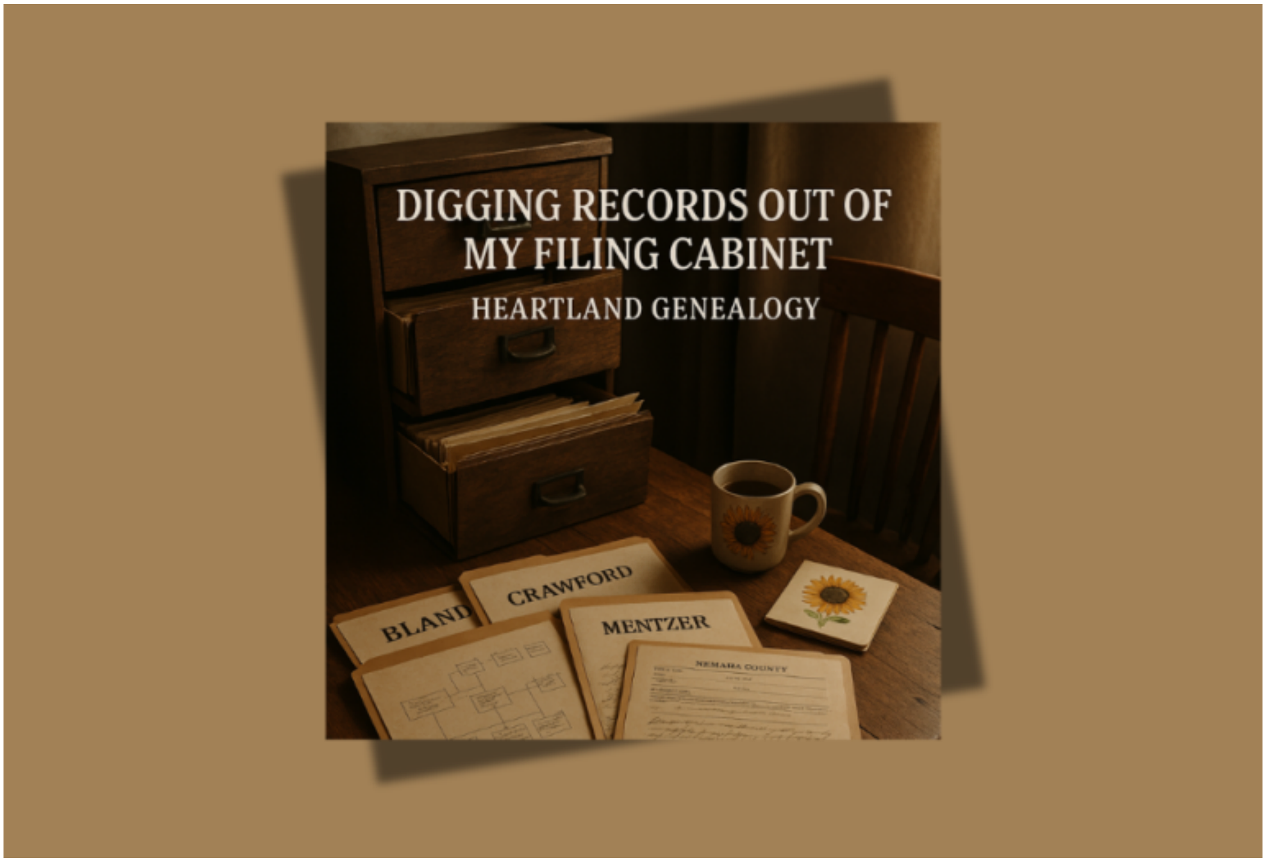
🏛️ Commemorate Their Service

As we approach the U.S. Army's 250th birthday, it's a perfect time to explore the military history in your own family. Whether for your blog, museum exhibit, or family storybook, tracing these early patriots brings the birth of our nation's army to life.

➡️ *Have a Revolutionary War ancestor of your own? I'd love to hear about them in the comments!*

Monday’s Diggings: 1985 Bradshaw Letter

By Marcia Crawford Philbrick
June 16, 2025
Briles
https://heartlandgenealogy.org/2025/06/16/mondays-diggings-1985-bradshaw-letter/



Today’s discovery in my BRILES folder is another treasure—a handwritten letter from Ysleta Bradshaw. This thoughtful piece of correspondence, dated May 1985, offers insights into her research on the Young and Briles families. The letter was transcribed with the help of ChatGPT to preserve its details and make it easier to share.

> To Marcia Philbrick
> 101 1/2 N. St.
> Seneca KS 66538
>
> **May 1985**
>
> From: **Ysleta Bradshaw**
> 2204 Robts Cut Off Rd
> Ft. Worth TX 76114
>
> **Re: Young-Briles Genealogy**
>
> Since I last heard from you, I have gone back another generation on my Youngs. I received the will of Henry Nease Young Sr. who died in 1837 Randolph Co., N.C. If you want a copy, let me know. Henry’s wife was Margaret? but I cannot locate her last name.
>
> I certainly appreciated the letter you sent me this time last year which listed ch(ildren) of Mary Briles & Henry Young.

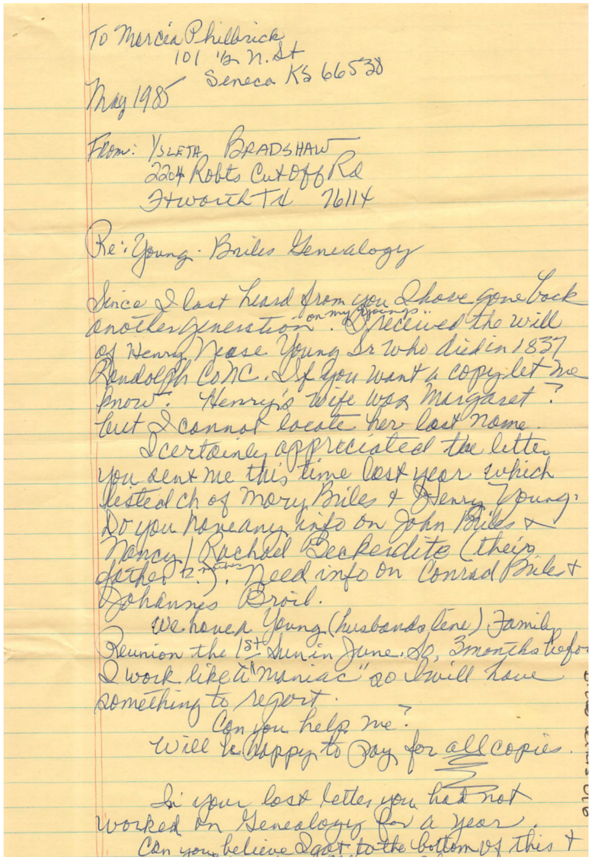
Do you have any info on John Briles & Nancy/Rachel Beckerdites (their father? & mother). Need info on Conrad Briles & Johannes Briles.

We have a Young (husband's line) family reunion the 1st Sunday in June.So 3 months to before I work like a "maniac" so I will have something to report.

Can you help me?
Will be happy to pay for all copies.

In your last letter you had not worked on Genealogy for a year.

Can you believe I got to the bottom of this & it was torn off — please excuse.



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Page 2

To Marcia Philbrick
Page 2 – From Ysleta Bradshaw 5.85

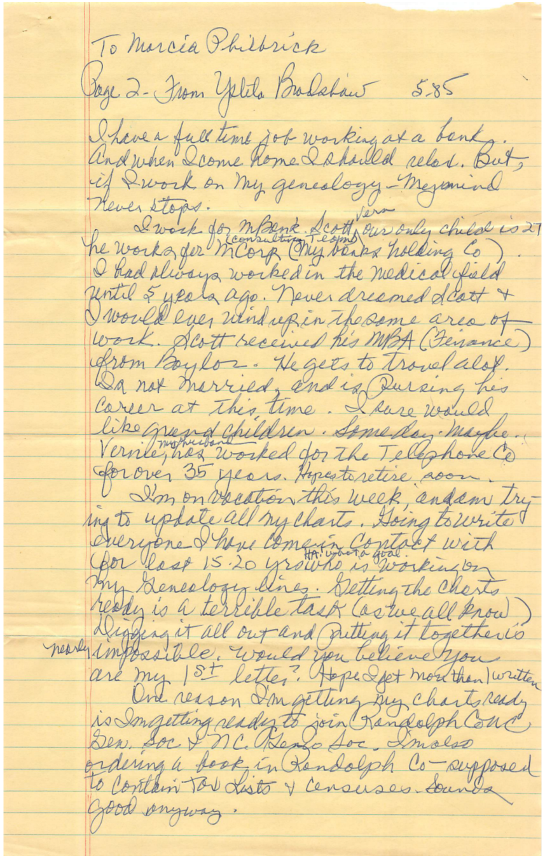
I have a full-time job working at a bank. And when I come home I should relax. But, if I work on my genealogy – my mind never stops.

I work for MBank. Scott Vern our only child is 27. He works for McCorp (my bank's holding co.). I had always worked in the medical field until 5 years ago. Never dreamed Scott & I would ever wind up in the same area of work. Scott received his MBA (Finance) from Baylor. He gets to travel a lot. Is not married and is pursuing his career at this time. Sure would like grandchildren. Some day maybe.

Vernie (my husband) has worked for the Telephone Co. for over 35 years. Hopes to retire soon.

I'm on vacation this week and am trying to update all my charts. Going to write everyone I have come in contact with for last 15–20 years (ha! what a goal)who is working on my genealogy lines. Getting the charts ready is a terrible task (as we all know) – digging it all out and putting it together is nearly impossible. Would you believe you are my 1st letter? Hoe I get more than 1 written.

One reason I'm getting my charts ready is I'm getting ready to join Randolph Co. Gen. Soc. I'm also ordering a book in Randolph Co. – supposed to contain tax lists & censuses. Sounds good anyway.



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page 3

To Marcia Philbrick
Page 3 – From Ysleta Bradshaw 5/1985

I am unable to locate how your line ties in with mine. May I have info regarding your descendants?

Would appreciate any information & help.

Most sincerely,
Ysleta Bradshaw

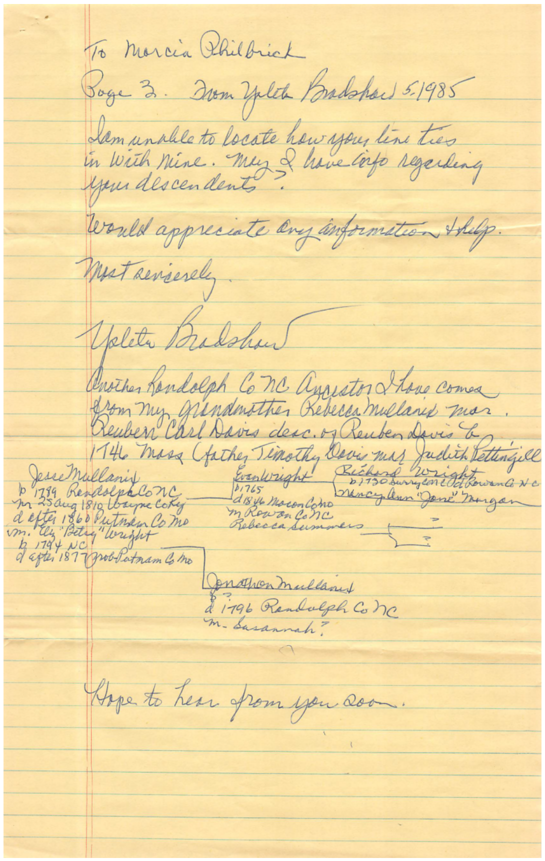
Another Randolph Co., NC ancestor line comes from my grandmother Rebecca Mullanix's mar. – Reuben Carl Davis, desc. of Reuben Davis b [1746 Mass] (father), Timothy Davis, and Judith Pettingill.

- Jesse Mullanix
  b. 1789 Randolph Co., NC
  m 25 Aug 1810Wayne Co., KY
  d. after 1860 Putnam Co., MO
  m. Eliz Betty Wright
  b. 1794 NC
  d. aft. 1877 (prob. Putnam Co., MO)
- Jonathan Mullanix

d. 1796 Randolph Co., NC
m. Susannah?

- Evan Wright
  b. 1765
  d. 1846 Macon Co., MO
  m. Rowan Co., NC
  Rebecca Summers
- Richard Wright
  b. 1730 Surrey Co., or Rowan Co., N.C.
  m. Nancy Ann "Jane" Morgan

Hope to hear from you soon.



To Marcia Philbrick

Page 3. From Yuleta Bradshaw 5-1985

I am unable to locate how your line ties in with mine. May I have info regarding your descendents?

Would appreciate any information & help.

Most sincerely,

Yuleta Bradshaw

Another Randolph Co NC Ancestor I have comes from my grandmother Rebecca Mullanix mar. Reuben Carl Davis desc. of Reuben Davis b 1746 Mass (father Timothy Davis mar Judith Pettingill

Jesse Mullanix
b 1789 Randolph Co NC
m 25 Aug 1810 Wayne Co Ky
d after 1860 Putnam Co Mo
m. Eliz "Betsy" Wright
b 1794 NC
d after 1877 prob Putnam Co Mo

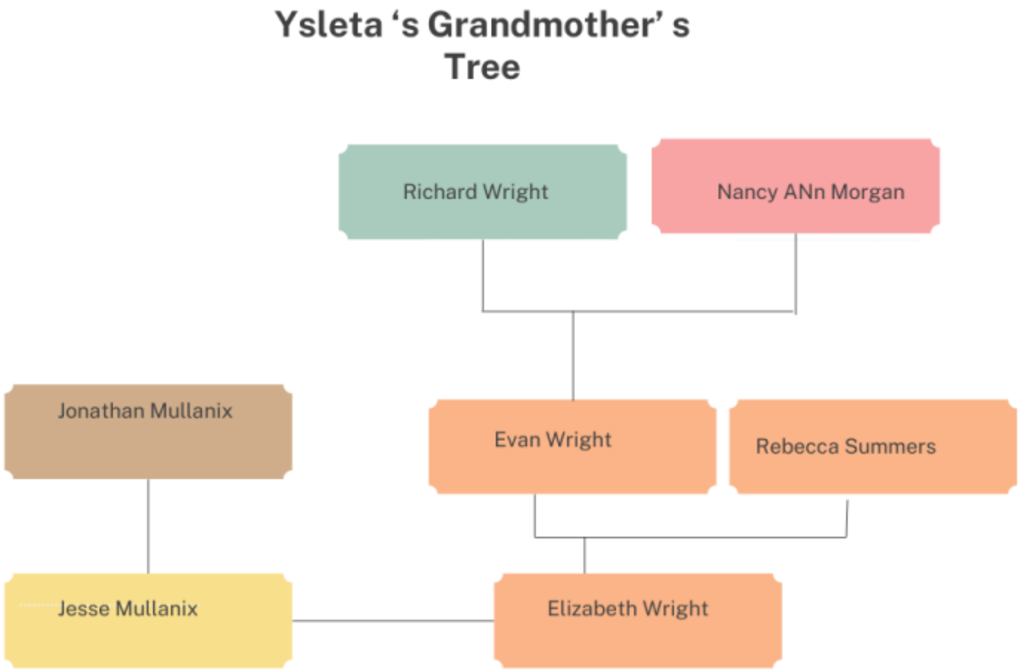
Evan Wright
b 1765
d 1846 Macon Co Mo
m Rowan Co NC
Rebecca Summers

Richard Wright
b 1730 Surry Co NC d Rowan Co NC
Nancy Ann "Jane" Morgan

Jonathon Mullanix
b ?
d 1796 Randolph Co NC
m. Susannah?

Hope to hear from you soon.

The final section of the letter is formatted like a pedigree chart, making it challenging to present in standard transcription form. To preserve its structure and meaning, I've included an image below showing the chart in a vertical layout.


Ysleta 's Grandmother' s Tree
Richard Wright
Nancy ANn Morgan
Jonathan Mullanix
Evan Wright
Rebecca Summers
Jesse Mullanix
Elizabeth Wright

The Jesse Mullanix mentioned in the letter and shown in the chart can be found on the FamilySearch Family Tree under ID **LH7J-ZXN**.

Letters like this one from Ysleta Bradshaw are a reminder of how genealogy once relied on handwritten notes, mailed queries, and patient collaboration. I'm grateful for her dedication—and for the insight she shared into our shared Briles ancestry. Preserving and sharing these pieces not only honors those who came before us but also keeps the conversation going for future generations of researchers.

Merges

By Marcia Crawford Philbrick
June 17, 2025
Mentzer
https://heartlandgenealogy.org/2025/06/17/merges/

1838
1988
MENTZER FAMILY
HEARTLAND GENEALOGY

Are you a FamilySearch user? If so, have you ever merged two profiles? It can be a powerful way to clean up duplicate entries and connect scattered family branches. Thanks to a few obituary clippings saved by my grandmother, I recently had the opportunity to do just that—merging profiles for both **Wilfred Mentzer** and his wife, **Clara Beine.**

The obituary for Wilfred Mentzer revealed that he was born in **Yates Center, Kansas**, and listed several siblings:

> *Brother, Harley Mentzer of Yates Center, Kansas; sisters, Mrs. Pearl Peterson of Glendale, Mrs. Mildred Van Valkenberg of Whittier, Mrs. Hazel Herold and Mrs. Cecil Beine, both of Yates Center, and Mrs. Aleta Tolle of Nebraska.*

These siblings clearly placed Wilfred in the family of **John Mentzer and Anna Wells**. On FamilySearch, that couple had a son listed as **Fred Mentzer (1903–1942)** with census records from 1910 and 1920 in Woodson County, Kansas. Separately, there was also a profile for **Wilfred Mentzer**, married to Clara Beine, but with no parents or early sources attached.

Using the obituary evidence, I merged the **Fred Mentzer** profile into the **Wilfred Mentzer** profile to create a more complete family record.

On the **Beine** side, I worked through the obituary for **Walter J. Beine**, which stated he was born in **1901 in Yates Center** and named several siblings:

> *Two brothers, Emil Beine of Yates Center and Henry Beine of Hatton, N.D.; one sister, Clara Mentzer of*

> *Rosemead, Calif.*

On FamilySearch, the family of **Friedrich August Beine** included a **Clara Beine (1909–Deceased)**, but her profile had no spouse listed and only one source attached—an obituary for her brother, **Henry Beine**, which also mentioned:

> *Sister, Clara Mentzer, Rosemead, Calif.*

These two obituaries—Walter's and Henry's—provided solid evidence that **Clara Beine**, daughter of Friedrich August Beine, was the same person as **Clara Mentzer**, wife of Wilfred. I merged the profiles and added Walter Beine's obituary as a source, including an image upload.

Thanks to my grandmother's obituary clippings, I was able to reconnect these **Mentzer–Beine families** to their **Yates Center, Kansas** roots—bridging a gap between California records and Kansas heritage.

Lost in the Login: A ChatGPT Lesson Learned

By Marcia Crawford Philbrick
June 18, 2025
Artificial Intelligence,Nafus
https://heartlandgenealogy.org/2025/06/18/lost-in-the-login-a-chatgpt-lesson-learned/

Do you use ChatGPT? If so, do you always make sure you're logged in before asking a question? I didn't—and I learned my lesson the hard way.

While sitting in a waiting room recently, I asked ChatGPT how my NAFUS ancestors might have traveled from Luzerne County, Pennsylvania, to Ontario County, New York. I included details like the 1828 land sale by William Nafus in Ontario County and a 1815 will left by his father, Cornelius Nevius, in Luzerne County. ChatGPT gave me a detailed response, including two possible migration routes.

And then I realized—I wasn't logged into my account.

To make matters worse, I didn't copy the response anywhere. Knowing that ChatGPT remembers past conversations *when you're logged in*, I quickly signed in, hoping to retrieve it.

I asked:

> "I just asked a question before logging in. Can you retrieve that question and answer or do I need to repeat it?"

ChatGPT's reply was immediate:

> *"I can't retrieve questions asked before you logged in, so you'll need to repeat your question here. Once you do, I'll be happy to help!"*

So, I started over. Since my new prompt wasn't word-for-word identical, the response was a bit different. But with a little back-and-forth, I was able to recover the essential information.

Lesson learned: Always log in *before* you ask an important question—and copy the answer just in case!

Below is the text from my conversations with ChatGPT about my Nafus / Nevius family and its movement from Pennsylvania to New York.

> William Nafus sold land in Ontario county NY in 1828. I haven't found not found where he received the land. His father, Cornelius Nevius , wrote a will in 1815 that was recorded in Lucerne county PA. How might William have migrated from Lucerne county PA to Ontario county NY (note surname is spelled a wide variety of ways)

Great question—this is a classic mid-Atlantic to upstate New York migration puzzle, especially with a surname like Nafus/Nevius that shows up in many variant forms. Let's break this down with plausible historical context and research strategies.

🔎 Migration Clues: William Nafus from Luzerne Co., PA to Ontario Co., NY

🧭 1. Migration Route Possibilities (1800s context)

By the early 1800s, many families were moving from eastern Pennsylvania into New York via established inland routes. Here's how William Nafus may have traveled:

- **Susquehanna River Pathway:** Luzerne County sits along the Susquehanna River. Migrants often traveled north on the river, then connected via overland routes to the Finger Lakes area.
- **Overland via the Catskills and Southern Tier:** A known trail led from the Wyoming Valley (Luzerne Co.) northwest through Tioga and Steuben Counties into Ontario County.
- **Genesee Road/Military Tract Settlements:** The state of New York distributed land in central and western NY (including Ontario County) as part of the Military Tract and other land speculation ventures, which attracted settlers from PA and New Jersey.

🧾 2. Land Ownership Clues

You noted William **sold** land in Ontario Co., NY in 1828, but his name doesn't show up in patents or early grants there. Try the following:

- **Deed Books (Grantees):** Look for earlier purchases in the Ontario County deed books. If William is not the first grantee, he may have inherited the land or purchased it informally.
- **Probate Link:** Check if William inherited the land from someone **other than** his father Cornelius—possibly an in-law or unrelated party.
- **Name Variants in Land Indexes:** Search under:
  - Nafus, Nevius, Naphis, Naefus, Navis, Neafus, Naphous, etc.
  - He may appear under *Wm.* or *W.* Nafus.

📜 3. Cornelius Nevius's Will in Luzerne Co., PA (1815)

If Cornelius Nevius left a will in 1815:

- Double-check if he bequeathed land *in New York* to William.
- If not, perhaps the will left personal property or money that William used to *buy land in NY*.
- Look for estate records: **Orphans Court, Executor bonds, or petitions** might provide migration hints or mention William's residence at the time.

🧩 4. Broader Family/FAN Network

Trace the migration of:

- **Cornelius's other children** or extended kin. Did any siblings of William move to Ontario County or nearby counties (e.g., Yates, Steuben, Monroe)?
- **Church Memberships:** Dutch Reformed, Lutheran, or Methodist churches in both Luzerne and Ontario Counties may list family members.
- **Tax Lists/Census:**
  - Luzerne County Tax Lists (1800–1815)
  - Ontario County Census Records (1810–1830)

📚 5. Local Histories and NY Land Records

Check:

- **Ontario Co. Histories (e.g., Everts 1876)**
- **New York State Land Papers (via NYSA or FamilySearch)**
- **Military Tract / Phelps & Gorham Purchase Records** – Ontario County was part of this 1780s–90s land boom.

✅ Actionable Next Steps

1. **Search Ontario Co. grantee index pre-1828** for land purchased by William or any Nafus variant.
2. **Check Cornelius's full probate file** in Luzerne County—look for land references and William's location at the

time.

3. **Map out the Nafus/Nevius family group** and see if others show up in New York (or if neighbors from Luzerne do).
4. Look at **tax lists and church records** in both counties—particularly around 1810–1830.

Would you like help transcribing Cornelius's will or searching for William in early New York deed indexes using known variant spellings?

> Were there two possible routes from Luzerne PA to Ontario NY in in25-1828? If so could you provide details for both routes?

Yes, during the 1825–1828 period, **two major overland migration routes** were commonly used by settlers moving from **Luzerne County, Pennsylvania** to **Ontario County, New York**. Each route followed natural features, early roads, and emerging transportation networks.

Here's a breakdown of both routes:

🛤️ Route 1: Susquehanna River → Chemung Valley Route (Northwest Overland Track)

Overview:

This was the **traditional inland migration path** from northeastern Pennsylvania to western and central New York. It followed river valleys and cut through what became the Southern Tier of New York.

Steps:

1. **Depart Luzerne County via Wilkes-Barre:**
    - Travelers moved northwest following the **Susquehanna River** upstream.
    - Early travelers might use river rafts or follow roads paralleling the river.
2. **Through Bradford or Tioga County, PA:**
    - Overland trek continued via **Towanda** or **Athens**, PA.
    - Entered New York near **Elmira** or **Corning**, NY.
3. **Chemung Valley Corridor:**
    - Followed the **Chemung River** toward the **Canisteo River valley**, eventually reaching **Bath, NY** in Steuben County.
4. **Toward Ontario County:**
    - Continued overland via the **Canandaigua Road** or connecting military roads northward into **Ontario County**, often through **Penn Yan** or **Naples**, NY.

Roads & Conditions:

- **Rough wagon trails**, sometimes Native American paths or improved post roads.
- The journey was **difficult and slow**, but it avoided tolls and canals.
- Settlers often traveled in **family groups or wagons** in spring/summer.

🚢 Route 2: Susquehanna River → Erie Canal (Water-to-Wagon Route)

Overview:

After the **Erie Canal opened in 1825**, this became the preferred route for faster travel and transport of goods. It combined **waterways and canal transit**, with a short overland trek at the start.

Steps:

1. **From Luzerne County to Harrisburg or Williamsport, PA:**
   - Took wagons downriver or roads toward Susquehanna feeder towns.
   - Loaded cargo at a navigable point along the **West Branch of the Susquehanna River**.
2. **Susquehanna Riverboat to Bald Eagle/Elmira/Towanda:**
   - Floated goods downriver, then shifted to overland wagons or short portage routes north to **Corning or Bath, NY**.
3. **Connect to the Erie Canal (via Rochester):**
   - Once in **western New York**, settlers accessed the **Erie Canal** near **Rochester** or **Palmyra**, both about 25–35 miles north of Ontario County.
4. **Overland into Ontario County:**
   - From canal towns, wagons moved **south into Ontario County** to towns like **Canandaigua**, **Geneva**, or **Naples**.

Advantages:

- **Erie Canal (opened 1825)** made this route far more efficient.
- Ideal for **families with household goods or farm equipment**.
- Travel time could be cut in half compared to the overland Chemung route.

🧭 Summary Comparison

Feature	Route 1: Chemung Valley Overland	Route 2: Susquehanna to Erie Canal
Start Point	Wilkes-Barre, PA	Wilkes-Barre or Williamsport, PA
Key Towns Passed	Elmira → Bath → Naples	Elmira → Rochester → Canandaigua
Mode of Travel	Wagon roads & foot trails	Boat, canal barge, then wagon
Road Conditions	Rugged but direct	Easier but involves transshipment
Best For	Early settlers before 1825	Post-1825 moves with goods
Duration	Several weeks	One to two weeks, if uninterrupted

📌 Conclusion:

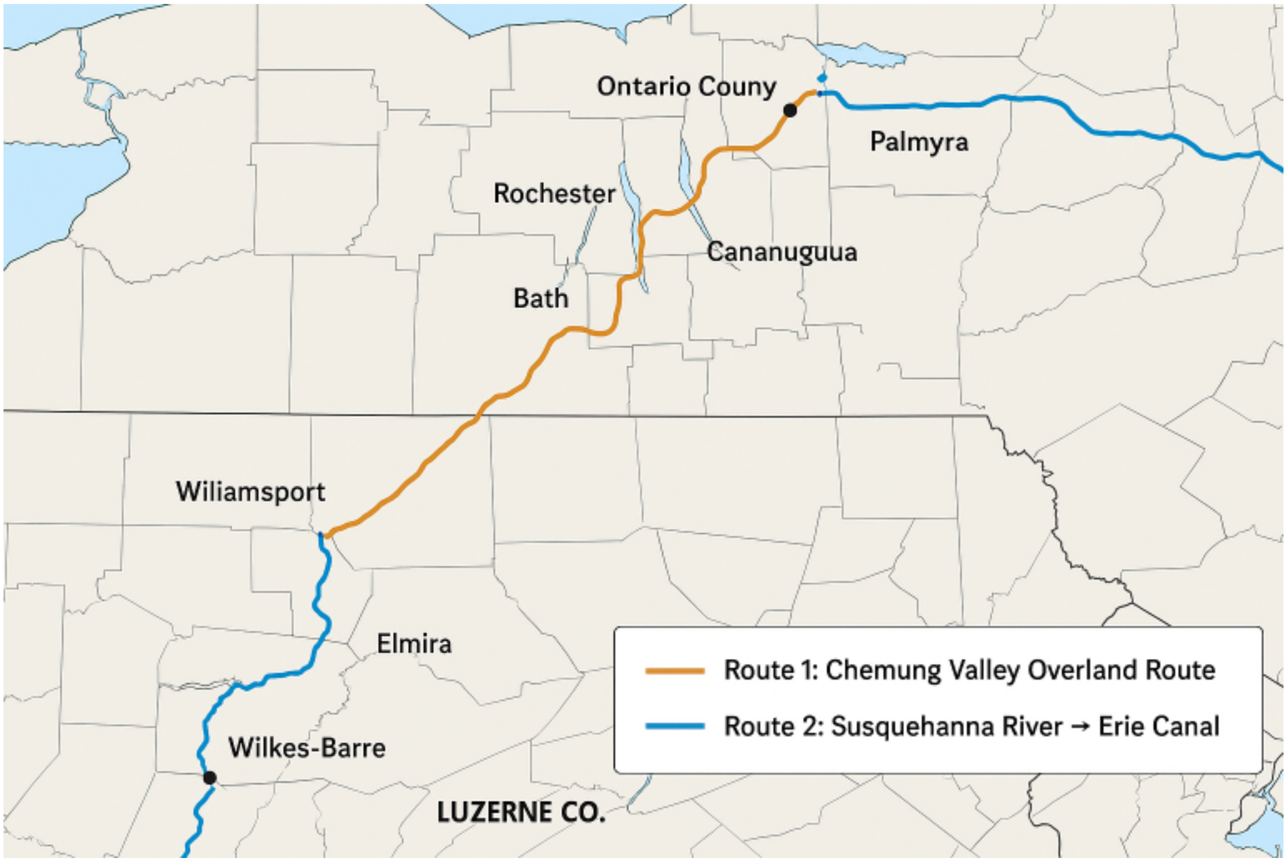
Since William Nafus sold land in Ontario County in 1828—just **three years after the Erie Canal opened**—either route was possible, but **the Erie Canal route would have been more efficient** and likely if he migrated with family or possessions.

However, if he migrated *before 1825* or was part of an early Pennsylvania-Dutch migration stream, the **Chemung Valley overland route** is more probable.

Would you like a visual map showing these two routes for a blog post or museum display?

> Yes, please provide a visual map showing these two routes?

Yes, please provide a visual map showing these two routes?


Ontario Couny
Palmyra
Rochester
Cananuguua
Bath
Wiliamsport
Elmira
Wilkes-Barre
LUZERNE CO.
Route 1: Chemung Valley Overland Route
Route 2: Susquehanna River → Erie Canal

Is there a group of records for the original sale of land in the Ontario county New York record? If so, what is the name for that group of records?

Yes, in **Ontario County, New York**, the original land sales—particularly from major land purchases like the **Phelps & Gorham Purchase**—are documented, but they are **not part of a single, centralized set** of county-level records. Here's how it breaks down and what to look for:

🗂️ Key Record Groups for Original Land Sales in Ontario County, NY

1. Phelps & Gorham Purchase Records

- **Time Period:** 1788–early 1800s
- **What They Contain:** Original land sales from Massachusetts land speculators (Phelps & Gorham) to individual settlers.
- **Repository:** Mostly held at the **New York State Archives** and **Ontario County Historical Society**.
- **What to Search:**
  - Abstracts of land sales
  - Grantee books
  - Survey maps and lot books

Search term to use: *Phelps and Gorham land transactions Ontario County*

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2. Ontario County Deeds – Grantee and Grantor Indexes

- **Time Period:** Early 1800s–present
- **Where to Access:**

  - **FamilySearch:** Digitized deeds and indexes
  - **Ontario County Clerk's Office:** Original volumes
  - **New York Land Records (FamilySearch)**:
    - https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/733855

📘 Look for:

- *Grantee index* (search for William Nafus/Nevius to find his purchases)
- *Grantor index* (look for his sales)
- Deed Book references with volume and page

---

3. Land Patents (New York State-Level Records)

- **Issued by:** State of New York
- **What They Are:** Formal conveyances from the state to the first private owner.
- **Repository:**
  - **New York State Archives** in Albany
  - Indexed by name in:
    - *New York Land Grants*
    - *Balloting Book and Other Documents Relating to Military Bounty Lands in the State of New York*

These may not show every Ontario County settler, but are essential for **original land holders**.

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4. Town Lot Books and Surveyor Records

- **What They Include:** Original plot surveys, lot ownership, and transfers within Ontario County towns.
- **Repositories:**
  - Ontario County town/village historian offices
  - County Historical Society collections

✅ Suggested Research Plan:

1. **Search Grantee/Grantor Indexes (FamilySearch)** for *William Nafus* and all spelling variants.
2. **Explore Phelps & Gorham land abstracts** to check if he was an early purchaser.
3. If no direct purchase is found, investigate **secondary transfer records**, **heir records**, or **assignments** in later deeds.
4. Consider checking **neighboring counties** (Yates, Monroe) in case of shifting boundaries.

Would you like direct links to the FamilySearch records or a downloadable cheat sheet for Ontario County land record terms and repositories?

> What can you tell me about the migration of the low Dutch from the area of Luzerne county, Pennsylvania into western New York such as Ontario county, New York?

The migration of **Low Dutch families**—descendants of early Dutch settlers from New York and New Jersey—into **Luzerne County, Pennsylvania** and eventually into **Western and Central New York (including Ontario County)** reflects broader settlement patterns tied to religion, land availability, and kinship networks.

Here's a focused overview relevant to your Nafus/Nevius research:

🌻 Who Were the Low Dutch?

- The term “**Low Dutch**” refers to settlers of **Netherlandish (Dutch) origin**, distinct from “High Dutch” (Germans).
- Most originally settled in **New Netherland** (New York, especially the Hudson Valley), then moved to **New Jersey**, and later **into Pennsylvania** and **western New York**.
- Many were **Reformed Church** members and often intermarried within tight-knit kin groups (Van Arsdalen, Nevius, Wyckoff, Rapalje, etc.).

📍 Step-by-Step Migration Pattern

1. New York/New Jersey to Pennsylvania (Mid-1700s)

- In the mid-to-late 1700s, many Low Dutch families migrated from **Somerset, Hunterdon, and Bergen Counties (NJ)** to **Northampton and Bucks Counties**, and later to **Luzerne and Monroe Counties** in Pennsylvania.
- Settled in areas like the **Wyoming Valley** (Wilkes-Barre), bringing **Dutch Reformed Church traditions** with them.
- The **Nevius (Nafus)** family was part of this group, often appearing in both church and civil records under variant spellings.

2. Pennsylvania to Western New York (Post-Revolutionary War)

- After the Revolutionary War and the 1790s land opening in **Western New York**, particularly through the **Phelps & Gorham Purchase**, families migrated northward.
- The opening of new lands **coincided with land pressures and religious tensions** in Pennsylvania, encouraging relocation.
- Many Dutch descendants moved into:
    - **Ontario County**
    - **Yates County (carved from Ontario in 1823)**
    - **Wayne, Seneca, Monroe Counties**, etc.

3. Religious Networks: Reformed & Dutch Churches

- Families often followed pastors and kin who helped organize **Reformed churches** in their new communities.
- Church records can link families from **New Jersey** → **Pennsylvania** → **New York**.
    - Look for **Reformed Dutch or Presbyterian church registers** in early Ontario/Yates records.

🔍 Key Traits of This Migration Group

Feature	Description
Origins	New York & New Jersey Dutch
Intermediate Stop	Luzerne, Northampton, Monroe Co., PA
Final Destinations	Ontario, Yates, Seneca, Monroe Co., NY
Timeframe	1780s–1820s
Religion	Dutch Reformed, later Presbyterian
Motivation	Land, kinship migration, religious freedom
Surname Variants	Nevius → Nafus, Naphus, Navis, Neafus

📚 Sources & Resources

1. **“The Low Dutch Company”** – A group migration to Kentucky and Ohio, but its early chapters reflect PA-NY movement.
2. **E. B. O’Callaghan’s Documents Relating to the Colonial History of New York** – Good for early Dutch families’ movement.
3. **Dutch Reformed Church Records (FamilySearch / NYG&B)** – Check Luzerne, Northampton (PA), and Ontario (NY) areas.
4. **Phelps & Gorham Purchase deeds** – Often mention early Dutch-descended buyers.

✅ What This Means for Your Nafus Research

- The **Nevius/Nafus family** likely originated in **New Jersey**, settled in **Luzerne Co., PA**, then **moved north** to take advantage of cheap land and family networks in Ontario County.
- The migration is consistent with many **Low Dutch settlers**, especially those **not tied to Palatine or German-speaking communities**.
- You may find **Nafus relatives or associated surnames** (e.g., Van Duyne, Van Arsdalen, Quick, Wyckoff) in both Luzerne and Ontario counties.

Would you like a surname-based timeline or migration chart for Nevius/Nafus from NJ → PA → NY?

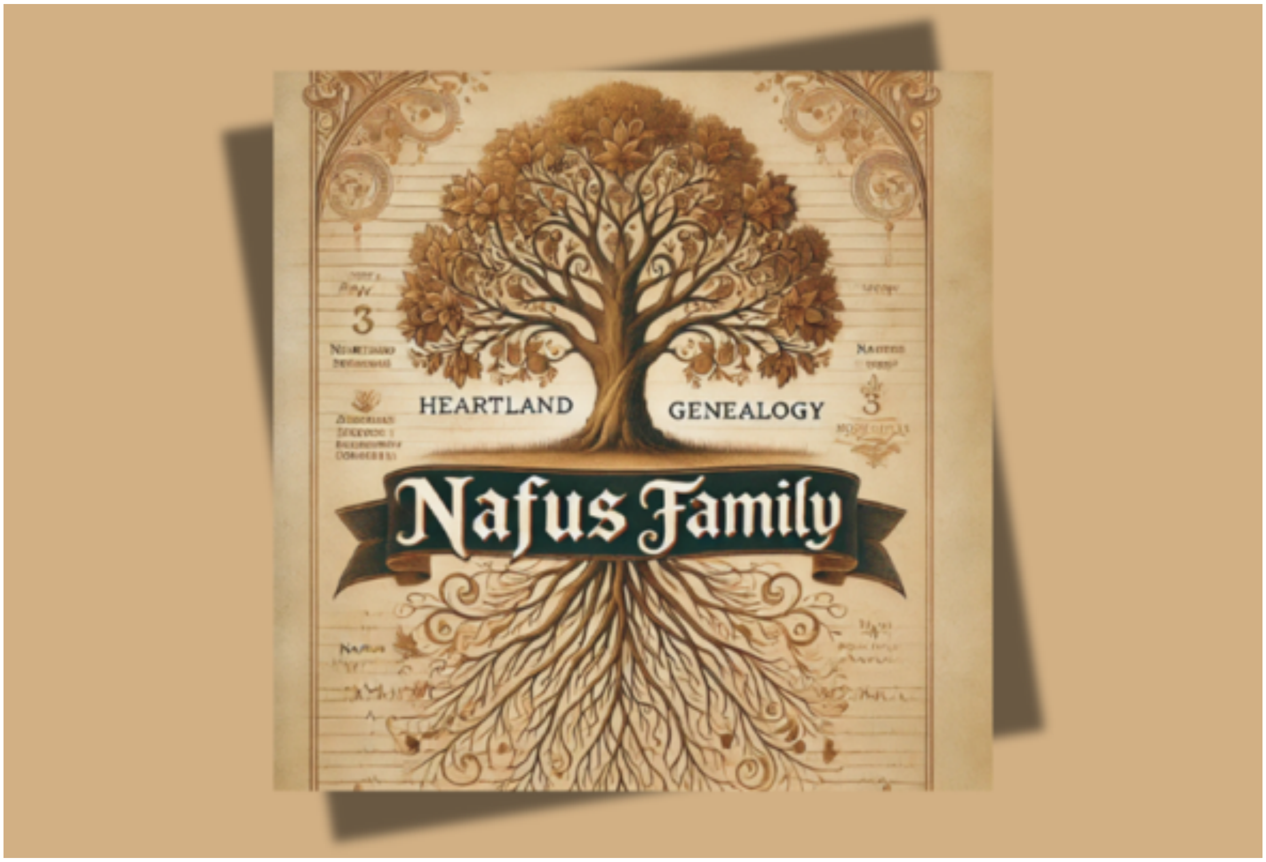
Conclusion

While the lost response was frustrating in the moment, it ultimately led me to revisit the question with fresh perspective—and still get a detailed, helpful answer. More importantly, it reminded me how crucial it is to be intentional when using AI tools for genealogy. Whether you’re researching an ancestor’s migration path or testing theories across generations, logging in and keeping good notes ensures that your discoveries aren’t lost along the way.

Have you had a similar experience using ChatGPT or another AI tool? I’d love to hear your story—or your favorite tips for keeping your digital research organized.

Searching by Given Name Only: A Strategy for Finding Nafus Records

By Marcia Crawford Philbrick
June 19, 2025
Nafus
https://heartlandgenealogy.org/2025/06/19/nafus-strategy/



Nafus Family on Heartland Genealogy

Do you have a family line where the surname is spelled in a variety of ways? If so, you know how frustrating it can be to locate all the relevant records. In my research, the *Nafus* surname has proven particularly tricky due to its many spelling variations. Thankfully, the book *Joannes Nevius, Schepen and Third Secretary of New Amsterdam under the Dutch, First Secretary of New York City under the English; and His Descendants* includes a helpful list of alternate spellings.

This inconsistency in spelling is exactly why I often rely on Soundex or wildcard searches. But today, while exploring FamilySearch's experimental search site, I decided to try a different approach in my hunt for records related to **Cornelius Nafus**—especially those from Seneca County, Ohio, around 1830.

Instead of searching by full name or Soundex, I searched **only by the given name, Cornelius**, within the appropriate time and place.

To my surprise (and delight), this strategy pulled up several records I might have otherwise missed due to misindexed or AI-transcribed surname variations. Some of the spellings included:

- Natus
- Nalue
- Rafes

- Names
- Naus
- Nakes
- Nafers
- Nobus
- Natur
- Nalus
- Volus
- Nessel
- Nabus
- Vafus

Most of these are likely the result of AI-generated transcriptions from handwritten or poor-quality images. Still, several turned out to be useful leads that I might not have found with a traditional surname search.

While this “given name only” search worked well for Cornelius, it’s less effective for his brother William—given how common that name is. But for more distinctive given names, this approach could be a powerful tool in navigating difficult surname spellings in digitized collections.

This experience reminded me just how valuable it can be to think outside the box—or in this case, outside the surname. While it won’t work for every ancestor, especially those with common given names, using a first-name-only search can uncover unexpected gems when dealing with tricky surname variations. If you’re hitting a brick wall with your own research, consider giving this method a try—especially on platforms using AI-generated indexing like FamilySearch Labs.

Have you ever had success with a similar strategy? I’d love to hear about your search experiments and what worked for you. Let’s keep helping each other break through those brick walls!

Friday Find

By Marcia Crawford Philbrick
June 20, 2025
Mentzer
https://heartlandgenealogy.org/2025/06/20/friday-find-83/

FRIDAY FINDS
FRIDAY FINDS
HEARTLAND GENEALOGY BLOG

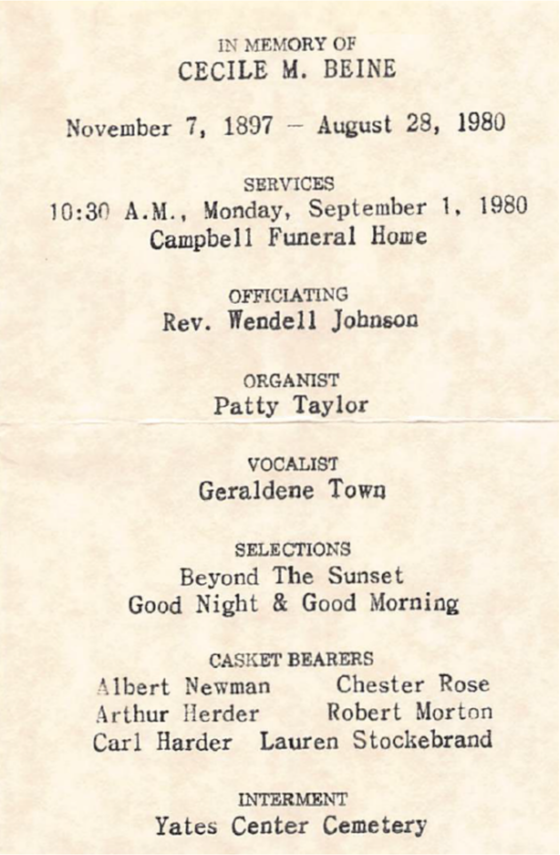
oday's Friday Find from my Mentzer notebook is another treasured funeral program preserved by my grandmother. This one honors the life of **Cecile M. Beine**, who was not just a relative but a **double cousin** to my grandmother. They shared two sets of common ancestors: **George Mentzer and Emiline (Minnick) Mentzer**, as well as **Thurston Kennedy Wells and Salome (Crandall) Wells**.

> **IN MEMORY OF**
> **CECILE M. BEINE**
> November 7, 1897 – August 28, 1980
>
> **SERVICES**
> 10:30 A.M., Monday, September 1, 1980
> Campbell Funeral Home
>
> **OFFICIATING**
> Rev. Wendell Johnson
>
> **ORGANIST**
> Patty Taylor
>
> **VOCALIST**
> Geraldene Town

SELECTIONS
Beyond The Sunset
Good Night & Good Morning

CASKET BEARERS
Albert Newman
Chester Rose
Arthur Herder
Robert Morton
Carl Harder
Lauren Stockebrand

INTERMENT
Yates Center Cemetery



IN MEMORY OF
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Yates Center Cemetery

🕊️ *Do you have funeral programs, letters, or keepsakes tucked away in a family notebook? Take a moment to preserve and share them—these small treasures hold powerful stories waiting to be told.* If Cecile M. Beine is part of your family tree, I'd love to hear from you in the comments or by email!

ABC Song: Hugh Judson Crawford

By Marcia Crawford Philbrick
June 21, 2025
Artificial Intelligence,Crawford
https://heartlandgenealogy.org/2025/06/21/abc-song-hugh-judson-crawford/

HEARTLAND
GENEALOGY
CRAWFORD
FAMILY

I recently ‘chatted’ with ChatGPT to create a biography for my great uncle, Hugh Judson Crawford. Continuing, the ABC process, I asked ChatGPT to compose song lyrics about Hugh’s life. Below are those lyrics:

> ### “From Kansas Plains to Distant Shores”
>
> *Ballad of Hugh Judson Crawford*
>
> **Verse 1**
> Born in Dodge on a September day,
> Where the prairie winds still roam,
> He learned his trade with books and ball,
> And Kansas made his home.
> He found his path through school and song,
> With chalk and open hand,
> And in the heart of Emporia town,
> He made his future stand.
>
> **Chorus**
> From Kansas plains to distant shores,
> He served with strength and grace.
> With steady hands, he built and taught

In every time and place.
A carpenter, a sailor brave,
A Freemason standing tall—
Hugh Judson Crawford gave his life
To learning, love, and all.

Verse 2
He wed a teacher, Gladys fair,
Beneath the winter sky,
Together they shaped a thousand minds
And watched the years roll by.
Through Arizona's desert schools
To Arctic winds up north,
They walked the road of duty's call,
Their mission pressing forth.

Chorus
From Kansas plains to distant shores,
He served with strength and grace.
With steady hands, he built and taught
In every time and place.
A carpenter, a sailor brave,
A Freemason standing tall—
Hugh Judson Crawford gave his life
To learning, love, and all.

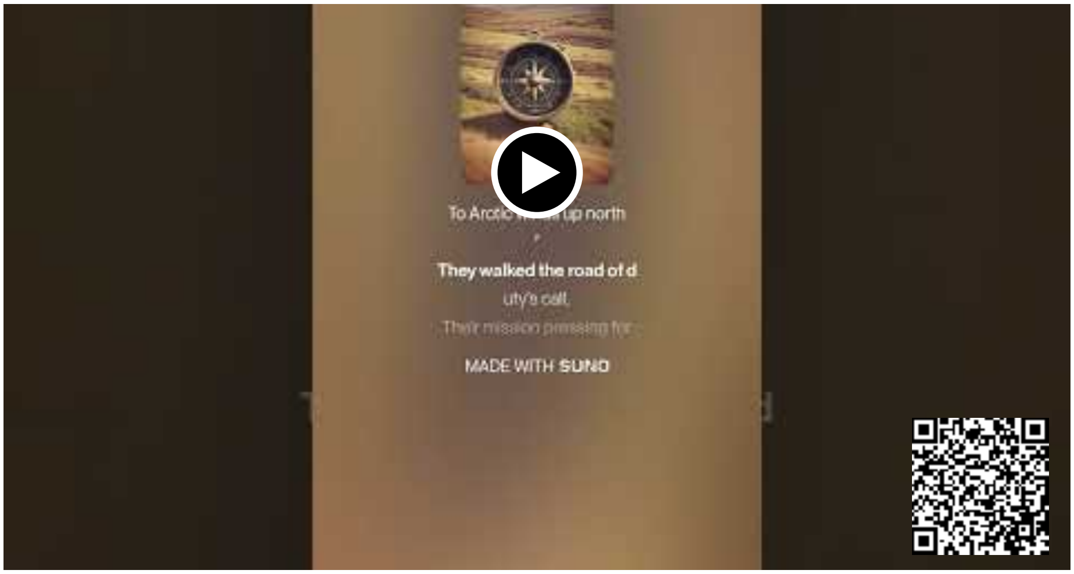
Bridge
He sailed where cold winds tore the sky,
Built runways on the sea,
Led Russian guests through battles fought
To keep the whole world free.
And when the guns had turned to tools,
He taught once more with pride—
On Navajo land, in classrooms bare,
Where wisdom would abide.

Final Chorus
From Kansas plains to distant shores,
His story still remains—
In every school, in every child,
In sun and Aleutian rains.
So raise a voice, a lesson taught,
A memory that won't fall—
Hugh Judson Crawford gave his life
To learning, love, and all.

I then copied the lyrics into Suno.com to create a song. Suno.com produced two versions of that song.

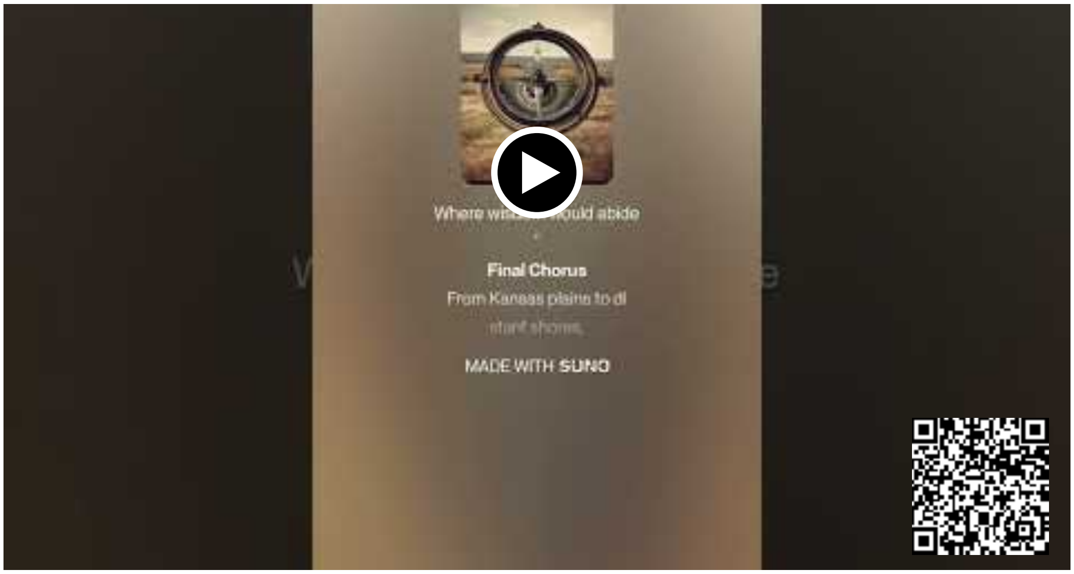
Version 1

https://youtube.com/watch?v=t_8T_oEkuVY


To Arctic up north
They walked the road of d
uty's call,
Their mission pressing for
MADE WITH SUNO

Version 2

https://youtube.com/watch?v=ZbV-zZJQcz8


Where would abide
Final Chorus
From Kansas plains to di
stant shores,
MADE WITH SUNO

Which version do you like?

Celebrating World Music Day

By Marcia Crawford Philbrick
June 22, 2025
Uncategorized
https://heartlandgenealogy.org/2025/06/22/celebrating-world-music-day/

Calling all Genea-Musings Fans:

It's Saturday Night again –

Time for some more Genealogy Fun!!

Your mission, should you decide to accept it (cue the Mission Impossible! music) is to:

1) According to Wikipedia, today is World Music Day! How should we celebrate?

2) How has music affected your life? What is your favorite music type? What are your favorite songs?

Music has been part of my life for as long as I can remember. While I didn't inherit my mother's musical talent, she made sure I had piano lessons. I learned how to read and play music, but over the years, I've realized that I'm more of a *consumer* than a *producer* when it comes to music.

During my high school and college years, I often fell asleep to music. My small but treasured record collection included musicals like *Camelot* and artists like The Carpenters. Later, I added John Denver, Neil Diamond, Simon & Garfunkel, and Chicago to my growing playlist.

After moving to rural Kansas—where radio choices were limited—my musical preferences began to shift. That's when I discovered country music. Around the time iPods came out, I started using iTunes and began adding even more variety to my collection, including Christian music, the Boston Pops, and Ferrante & Teicher. Today, I still use iTunes to organize and play my music—and my library has grown to over 9,200 songs!

While I have playlists spanning several genres, I find myself listening to Christian music more than anything else. It's what centers me. Below is one of my current favorites.

https://youtube.com/watch?v=aHdou4oGDTc

Eye of the Storm

Who Was There

By Marcia Crawford Philbrick
June 23, 2025
[Massachusetts](#),[Revolutionary_War](#)
https://heartlandgenealogy.org/2025/06/23/who-was-there/

IN CONGRESS JULY 4, 1776.
The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America
Revolutionary War
AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

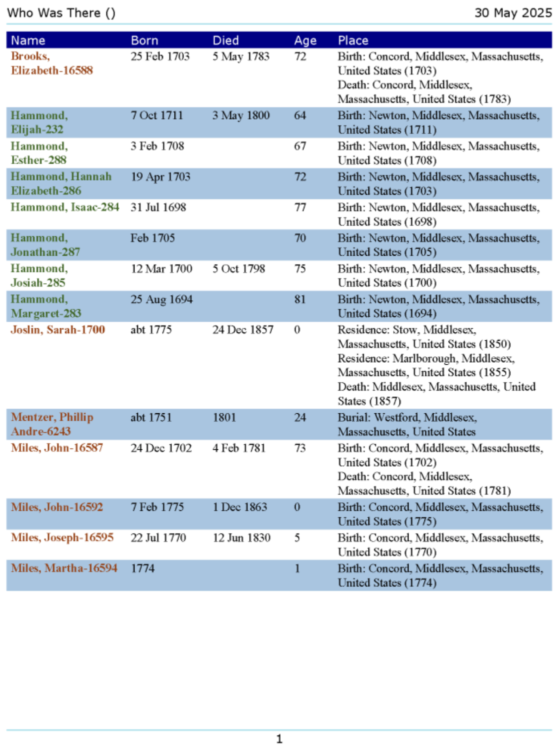
Have you ever tried to pull a list of people from your genealogy file who were buried in a specific cemetery? Most of us have. But have you ever tried to identify who was living in a certain area during a major historical event?

With the upcoming 250th anniversary of the American Revolution, I became curious—who in my family tree was living in Massachusetts around the time of the battles of Lexington and Concord?

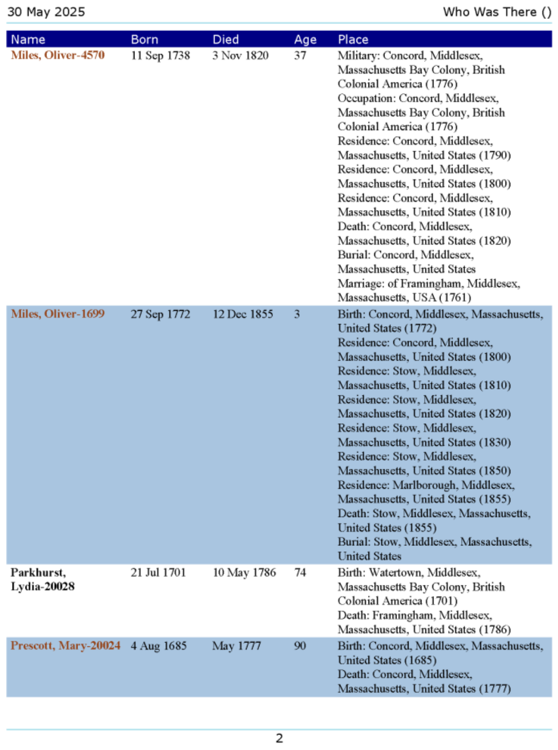
At first, I created a group in RootsMagic for individuals with any events recorded in Massachusetts before 1800. But then I discovered something even better—RootsMagic includes a built-in **"Who Was There"** report. This powerful tool does exactly what I needed. I simply told it to find people living in Massachusetts in 1775, and it generated a list showing each person's name, birth date, death date, age in 1775, and event places tied to Massachusetts.

Thanks to RootsMagic, I now have a clearer picture of who in my tree may have witnessed the earliest sparks of the Revolutionary War.

Below is a list of people in my RootsMagic file for 1775 Middlesex county, Massachusetts.



Name	Born	Died	Age	Place
Brooks, Elizabeth-16588	25 Feb 1703	5 May 1783	72	Birth: Concord, Middlesex, Massachusetts, United States (1703) Death: Concord, Middlesex, Massachusetts, United States (1783)
Hammond, Elijah-232	7 Oct 1711	3 May 1800	64	Birth: Newton, Middlesex, Massachusetts, United States (1711)
Hammond, Esther-288	3 Feb 1708		67	Birth: Newton, Middlesex, Massachusetts, United States (1708)
Hammond, Hannah Elizabeth-286	19 Apr 1703		72	Birth: Newton, Middlesex, Massachusetts, United States (1703)
Hammond, Isaac-284	31 Jul 1698		77	Birth: Newton, Middlesex, Massachusetts, United States (1698)
Hammond, Jonathan-287	Feb 1705		70	Birth: Newton, Middlesex, Massachusetts, United States (1705)
Hammond, Josiah-285	12 Mar 1700	5 Oct 1798	75	Birth: Newton, Middlesex, Massachusetts, United States (1700)
Hammond, Margaret-283	25 Aug 1694		81	Birth: Newton, Middlesex, Massachusetts, United States (1694)
Joslin, Sarah-1700	abt 1775	24 Dec 1857	0	Residence: Stow, Middlesex, Massachusetts, United States (1850) Residence: Marlborough, Middlesex, Massachusetts, United States (1855) Death: Middlesex, Massachusetts, United States (1857)
Mentzer, Phillip Andre-6243	abt 1751	1801	24	Burial: Westford, Middlesex, Massachusetts, United States
Miles, John-16587	24 Dec 1702	4 Feb 1781	73	Birth: Concord, Middlesex, Massachusetts, United States (1702) Death: Concord, Middlesex, Massachusetts, United States (1781)
Miles, John-16592	7 Feb 1775	1 Dec 1863	0	Birth: Concord, Middlesex, Massachusetts, United States (1775)
Miles, Joseph-16595	22 Jul 1770	12 Jun 1830	5	Birth: Concord, Middlesex, Massachusetts, United States (1770)
Miles, Martha-16594	1774		1	Birth: Concord, Middlesex, Massachusetts, United States (1774)



Name	Born	Died	Age	Place
Miles, Oliver-4570	11 Sep 1738	3 Nov 1820	37	Military: Concord, Middlesex, Massachusetts Bay Colony, British Colonial America (1776) Occupation: Concord, Middlesex, Massachusetts Bay Colony, British Colonial America (1776) Residence: Concord, Middlesex, Massachusetts, United States (1790) Residence: Concord, Middlesex, Massachusetts, United States (1800) Residence: Concord, Middlesex, Massachusetts, United States (1810) Death: Concord, Middlesex, Massachusetts, United States (1820) Burial: Concord, Middlesex, Massachusetts, United States Marriage: of Framingham, Middlesex, Massachusetts, USA (1761)
Miles, Oliver-1699	27 Sep 1772	12 Dec 1855	3	Birth: Concord, Middlesex, Massachusetts, United States (1772) Residence: Concord, Middlesex, Massachusetts, United States (1800) Residence: Stow, Middlesex, Massachusetts, United States (1810) Residence: Stow, Middlesex, Massachusetts, United States (1820) Residence: Stow, Middlesex, Massachusetts, United States (1830) Residence: Stow, Middlesex, Massachusetts, United States (1850) Residence: Marlborough, Middlesex, Massachusetts, United States (1855) Death: Stow, Middlesex, Massachusetts, United States (1855) Burial: Stow, Middlesex, Massachusetts, United States
Parkhurst, Lydia-20028	21 Jul 1701	10 May 1786	74	Birth: Watertown, Middlesex, Massachusetts Bay Colony, British Colonial America (1701) Death: Framingham, Middlesex, Massachusetts, United States (1786)
Prescott, Mary-20024	4 Aug 1685	May 1777	90	Birth: Concord, Middlesex, Massachusetts, United States (1685) Death: Concord, Middlesex, Massachusetts, United States (1777)

Who Was There () 30 May 2025

Name	Born	Died	Age	Place
Stone, Martha-16361	1741	1813	34	Marriage: of Framingham, Middlesex, Massachusetts, USA (1761)

Why Genealogists Need Good Citations

By Marcia Crawford Philbrick
June 24, 2025
[Crawford](),[FamilySearch](),[Ohio]()
https://heartlandgenealogy.org/2025/06/24/why-genealogists-need-good-citations/

HEARTLAND
GENEALOGY
CRAWFORD
FAMILY

Have you ever stopped to consider *why* genealogists need to use well-crafted citations? For a long time, I believed that if a citation helped another researcher locate the source, it was good enough.

Recently, I came across a citation in my files that—at first glance—seemed perfectly fine:

> "Crawford," *Miami Valley Genealogies*, Vol. 2: Families A–K, Brien Lindsay (Dayton, Ohio: Brien, maybe 1960), pp. 49–53.

I have a photocopy of this article in my files and wanted to revisit the source to search for members of my Crawford FAN Club. But the citation didn't include the *repository*—so I had no clue where I originally accessed the book.

Determined, I began searching Archive.org, FamilySearch Books, WorldCat, Ancestry, Amazon, and even Google. I couldn't find this exact title anywhere.

That left me wondering: *Is my citation actually correct?*

Refusing to give up, I tried the FamilySearch Catalog again—this time searching by the author's name. That led me to a listing for *Miami Valley Genealogies* by Lindsay M. Brien. Scrolling down, I found a microfilm version (007712477). On that reel of digitized microfilm, Volume 2 begins around image 390, and the Crawford entry appears on page 58 (image 450):

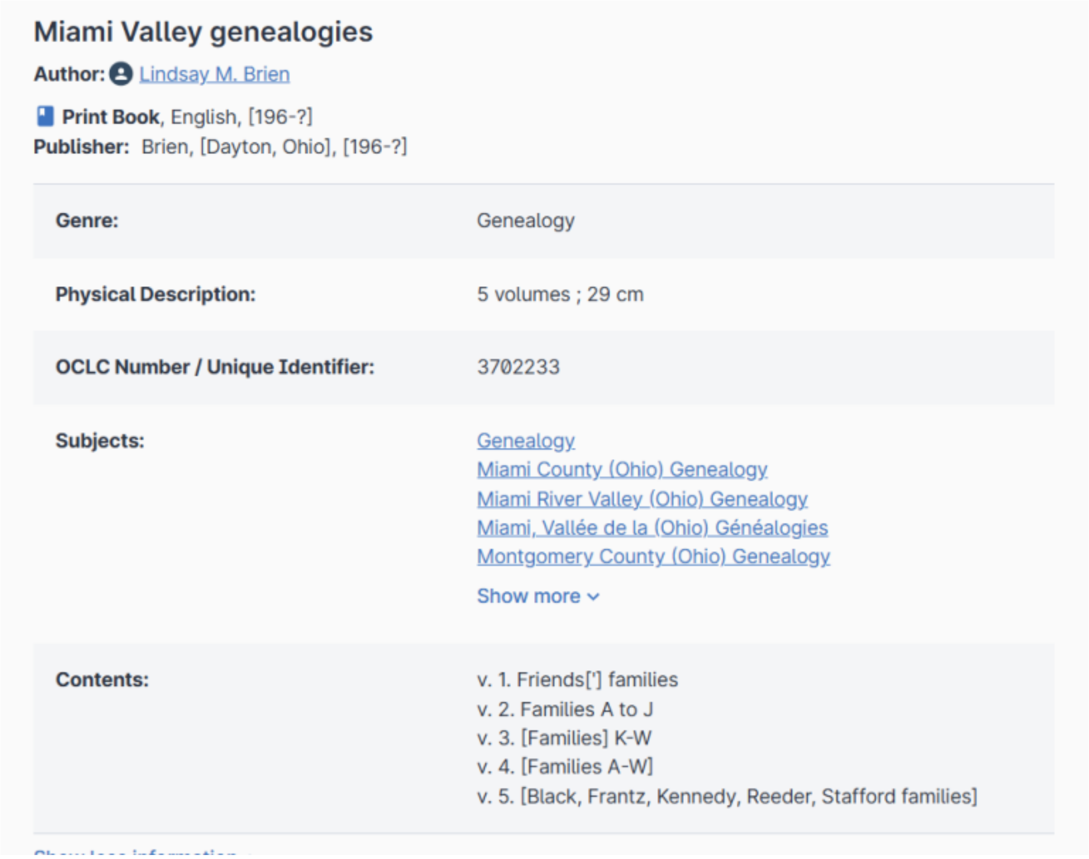
> Brien Lindsay, Miami Valley Genealogies: 145 Family Records, Vol. 2: Families A-J (n.p.: n.p., n.d.), p. 58 (image 456 of 1204); digitized microfilm, FamilySearch, DGS #007712477 : viewed online 20 June 2025.

While I haven't done a side-by-side comparison between the microfilm and my photocopy, both sections share the same title. However, there are inconsistencies:

- My notes indicate Volume 2 covers *A–K*, but the microfilm version is *A–J*.
- My photocopy starts on page 48, while the microfilm places the Crawford section on page 58.
- The texts are not identical.

That prompted another WorldCat search, where I finally located a record matching my handwritten title. It's held in a handful of libraries:

- Newberry Library
- Allen County Public Library
- Wright State University Libraries
- Cincinnati & Hamilton County Public Library
- Dayton Metro Library
- Houston Public Library



Miami Valley genealogies

Author: Lindsay M. Brien

Print Book, English, [196-?]
Publisher: Brien, [Dayton, Ohio], [196-?]

Genre:	Genealogy
Physical Description:	5 volumes ; 29 cm
OCLC Number / Unique Identifier:	3702233
Subjects:	Genealogy Miami County (Ohio) Genealogy Miami River Valley (Ohio) Genealogy Miami, Vallée de la (Ohio) Généalogies Montgomery County (Ohio) Genealogy Show more
Contents:	v. 1. Friends['] families v. 2. Families A to J v. 3. [Families] K-W v. 4. [Families A-W] v. 5. [Black, Frantz, Kennedy, Reeder, Stafford families]

Unfortunately, I don't recall ever visiting any of these repositories.

And that's the point: **I made a mistake by not recording where I accessed the source.**

Crawford Family in Miami Valley Genealogies

By Marcia Crawford Philbrick
June 25, 2025
Crawford,Ohio
https://heartlandgenealogy.org/2025/06/25/crawford-family-in-miami-valley-genealogies/

HEARTLAND
GENEALOGY
CRAWFORD
FAMILY

While going back thru some of my older research, I uncovered photocopies about the Crawford family from Miami Valley Genealogies, Vol 2, A-K. In trying to update my citation, I discovered a similar book but only covering letters A thru J. Below is a transcription from that second book.

> CRAWFORD
> James Crawford settled on Middle River in Augusta Co.,
> where he died in 1751. His wife was Elizabeth Robertson, sister
> of William Robertson. Issue:
> Jane Crawford who married 1769 James Brown.
> James ” » Jr. who qualified as a Justice Apr. 28, 1785.
> In Chalkley, Vol. 1, p. 370, May 1774, “James Brown and Jane his wife,
> married July, 1769, late Jane Crawford, daughter of James who died
> 1751, possessed of considerable estate, leaving a widow, Elizabeth
> and two children, Jane (above) and James.
> Elizabeth Crawford, nee’ Robertson, sister of William.
> James, Sr., had a brother, Patrick Crawford.”

> George Crawford was in Virginia as early as 1747 when he was
> appointed overseer of the road. He died between 1780–1784. The name
> of his wife is not known and the list of his children is not complete.

Those knows:

1. James Crawford oldest son died 1798. He married Dec. 30, 1786 Mary Crawford, a cousin, daughter of Patrick. Issue:
   Sarah married Charles McClung
   James Crawford never married
   William ” “ “
   John ” married Jan. 1819, Margaret Bell (dau. of Wm.)
   George ” died infant
   Elizabeth ” married Samuel McClung, lived in Greenbrier Co.
   Mary “ horn after father’s death, married John Allen.
   In Chalkley, Vol. 2, p. 259, Crawford vs. Crawford, 1821:
   “William Bell and Margaret Crawford, Executors of James Crawford, who died in Augusta Co., will dated 1798, leaving 6 children, 4 sons, 2 dau. One daughter born after his death. Son George died infant; Wm. never married; Sarah married Charles McClung; Elizabeth married Samuel McClung; Polly, posthumous dau. married John Allen; Sarah & Polly are dead; Mary, the widow lived with her dau. Elizabeth, in Greenbrier Co.”
2. John Crawford – no record.
3. George ” served in Revolution; July 18, 1786 (Chalkley Vol.1, p.246) he is allowed for a gun lost in service, and in 1799 is exempt from levy because of age and infirmity (p.292).
4. Daughter Crawford married Col, Andrew Anderson as his first wife. She died Aug. 12, 1766, and he married second Mar. 13, 1788, her cousin Martha Crawford, dau. of Patrick (Chalkley, vol. 2, p. 203).
   “Col. Andrew Anderson deposes Oct. 29, 1818 that he married in Staunton, the oldest dau. of George Crawford of Agusuts. She died Aug. 12, 1786.”

-59—
William Crawford will recorded in Rockbridge Co., June 3, 1783.
Names wife, 3 sons, George, William, John; daughters, Eleanor, Isabell, Mary, Elizabeth.
Sarah Crawford married her cousin, Robert Crawford, son of Alexander. Issue:
George, Elizabeth, Hugh, James, Jane, Robert, William, and John. There were perhaps other children.

Patrick Crawford was born in Ireland and came first to Pennsylvania and removed from there to Augusta Co., Va., about 1750 (Waddell). His wife was Sarah Wilson and they had four sons and five daughters. The daughters were:
Martha, bap. 1748, probably died young.
Elizabeth, b. Oct. 18, 1751, married Alexander Robertson.
Pegey (Margaret) married John Crawford (son of George).
Dau. married James McChesney, had a son George.
Martha, b. May 10, 1761, married Mar. 13, 1788, Col. Andrew Anderson as his second wife. His first wife, her cousin, daughter of George Crawford, died 1786.
Mary married Dec. 30, 1786, James Crawford (oldest son of George).
The sons were:
George Crawford, born Oct. 1, 1754, married June 23, 1788, Nancy Winter (Dau. of Wm. & Ann (Boone) Winter)
Issue:
Nancy Crawford married John Miller.
Hannah ” “ Harry “
Sarah ” “ James Bell (his 2nd wife)
Jane ” “ Franklin McCue
Martha ” “ Peter Hanger
Polly ” “ James Bourland, Sept. 17, 1812
Margaret ” “ James Walker

The above from Chalkley, Vol. 1, p. 427: “George Crawford died intestate leaving 6 children” etc.;”Peggy a minor;” Nancy who married John Miller not in deed.
John Crawford (Maj. John), born Mar. 29, 1764; married July 5, 1791, Rebecca Allen (dau. of Capt. James)
Issue:
Elizabeth married Capt. William Ingles
Sarah ” John Hyde
Margaret ” Cyrus “ (1st wife)
Maj. James ” Cynthia McClung
John ” Harriet “
George W. never married
Ann married Franklin McCue, 2nd wife
Mary ” Edward Moorman
Rebecca ” Stewart McClung
In 1781 Patrick and his sons George & John appear in list of Tithables.

-60-

3. William Crawford born Aug. 6, 1767; married Nancy Smith (dau. of Abraham Smith).
   Issue: Benjamin, James, John, George, William and six daughters.
   Benjamin married Magdalen Cochran; issue: Elizabeth; James.
   Nancy married Col. James Crawford of Culpeper; Addison; Benjamin.
   James died unmarried.
   John married Mary Allen.
4. James Crawford born Aug. 6, 1767, named as second son of Patrick, married a Miss McClung of Greenbrier and had issue:
   John H. Crawford married Mrs. Tirkle née Rice.
   Wm. H. married Miss McChesney of Rockbridge.
   Edward married daughter of Wm. Crawford of Stone Ch.
   James “ in Texas; desc. unknown.
   Marshall “ daughter of Alexander Crawford of Crawford’s Springs, Augusta Co.

61–
William Crawford, 5th son of Patrick, married 1st Margaret Bouland,
daughter of James Bouland.
Issue:
James, married Mary Miller, daughter of William Miller
Sarah, “ E. C. Crawford
Ann, unmarried
George, married Lillie Parkins, daughter of Isaac Parkins and granddaughter of Col. Samuel Hamsberger
Benjamin, unmarried
William married 2nd, Sarah Bouland, sister of 1st wife. No issue.

-62-
Crawford – Warren Co., Ohio
Alexander, Thomas, Samuel and Oliver Crawford are found in the early records of Warren Co., Ohio. Perhaps sons of Samuel, Sr., who settled in Deerfield Twp. soon after 1790.
In 1801, June 2, Thomas Crawford purchased 106⅔ acres in Deerfield Twp., from John Cleve Symmes (part of Sec. 22-T 1-R 2). Deed Book 1, p. 241.
Thomas Crawford died in 1811, as John Bigham and Samuel Crawford are appointed Adm. Oct. 24, 1811, and Feb. 19, 1812, Samuel Crawford is appointed guard. for Alexander, Andrew, and John Crawford, minors of Thomas, dec’d. In 1825, Dec. 31 (Deed Book 12, p. 128) the heirs of Thomas Crawford:
“Clark Baker and Ruth his wife, late Ruth Crawford, and John Crawford, of the county of Warren, State of Ohio, heirs of Thomas Crawford, dec’d, of the first part, and Alexander Crawford of same, of second part… Land in county of Warren, Deerfield Twp., part of Sec. 22-T 4-R 2. 106⅔ acres.
Ruth Crawford married Clark Baker Apr. 1, 1813.

> Alexander Crawford was a large land owner and his name appears in many deeds. One deed of sale (Book 13, p. 60) is from Alexander Crawford and Catharine, his wife, to Jesse Hutchinson. Mrs. Catharine Crawford died 1828, age 57 years (born 1771), and is buried in the old cemetery in Lebanon. No record of descendants.
>
> ---
>
> Samuel Crawford, Jr., son of Samuel who came to Ohio in 1790, married Jan. 5, 1815, Charity Scofield, born in Deerfield Twp. 1797.
> Issue: Ruth, Oliver, Joseph, Thomas, Jane, Samuel, John, and Andrew.
> Samuel died Feb. 1836. Samuel Clark is appointed Adm. Feb. 29, 1836, and Oct. 16, 1837, Charity is appointed guard. for Oliver, Joseph, Thomas, Jane, Samuel, John, Andrew.
>
> -63-
> Oliver Crawford was born Feb. 27, 1779 and died Jan. 18, 1827;
> he married in Warren Co., May 7, 1811, Peggy Nealy (dau. of John & Jane Neely).
> Margaret Neely was born Mar. 8, 1780, and died Jan. 16, 1851.
> After the death of Oliver Crawford, she married Apr. 22, 1830, Samuel R. Bell;
> he was born June 17, 1784, died Nov. 23, 1842.
> Both buried at Zoar.
> Oliver and Margaret (Neely) Crawford had issue:
> Jane Crawford, born Jan. 31, 1812
> Judith Crawford, born Mar. 16, 1814
> Sarah Crawford, born June 1, 1816; died Mar. 17, 1881
> Samuel Crawford, born July 24, 1819; died Sept. 18, 1879
> John N. Crawford, born Jan. 26, 1823; died May 6, 1876
> Ruth Ann Crawford, born Nov. 13, 1825; died Jan. 21, 1887
>
> One branch of the Crawford family settled in Miami Co.
> Robert Crawford, Sr. left a will dated May 19, 1817, in which he names his Wife – Hannah, Sons – Robert C., James Lee, and John H.; Daughter – Charlotte Morrison; Grandson: Andrew Crawford
> The will of the son Robert C. Crawford was recorded Sept. 24, 1842.
> His wife was Polly; Sons: Robert C., Samuel, John B., Joseph, James, George W.; Daughter Nancy; daughter Eliza (and her children)
> Township:
> Robert Crawford 1735-1817
> Hannah Mears Crawford 1738-1834
> Robert Crawford 1771-1842
> Mary Crawford 1782-1847 (added by hand: nee Grimes)
> James 1816-1845
> At New Carlisle are buried
> Charlotte Morrison, died Aug. 17, 1841, age 75 yrs. 2mo. 5da
> Mary Crawford, wife of Robert C., died July 18, 1843, age 28 yrs. 2 mo. 24 days
>
> ---
>
> Brien Lindsay, Miami Valley Genealogies: 145 Family Records, Vol. 2: Families A-J (n.p.: n.p., n.d.), p. 58 (image 456 of 1204); digitized microfilm, FamilySearch, DGS #007712477 : viewed online 20 June 2025.

I then asked ChatGPT for help identifying the various family groups. My first request returned eroneous information. Thus, I changed the prompt to limit it to one section of the article. Below is the information pulled for James Crawford's entry of page 58:

> ### Family Group: James Crawford & Elizabeth Robertson
>
> **Husband:** James Crawford
>
> - **Death:** 1751, Augusta County, Virginia
> - **Occupation:** landholder

- **Estate:** Described as “considerable” in court records
- **Sibling:** Brother – Patrick Crawford

Wife: Elizabeth Robertson

- **Relation:** Sister of William Robertson
- **Status after husband’s death:** Survived James; mentioned in court records

Children:

1. **Jane Crawford**
    - **Marriage:** 1769, to James Brown
    - *Court record:* May 1774 (Chalkley, Vol. 1, p. 370):
      “James Brown and Jane his wife, married July, 1769, late Jane Crawford, daughter of James who died 1751…”
2. **James Crawford, Jr.**
    - **Position:** Qualified as a Justice, Apr. 28, 1785
    - *Mentioned as a minor child in estate papers of James Sr.*

I continued working with ChatGPT to get a family listing for George Crawford. Since his information appeared on two pages, I had use 2 prompts to get the entire family information.

Family Group: George Crawford (d. between 1780–1784)

Husband: George Crawford

- **Birth:** Unknown
- **Death:** Between 1780–1784
- **Occupation/Public Role:** Appointed overseer of the road in 1747 (Augusta Co., VA)
- **Military:** Possibly served in the Revolution (see entry for George, Jr., 1786–1799)
- **Note:** Wife’s name not recorded; children’s list may be incomplete

---

Known Children:

1. **James Crawford**
    - **Death:** 1798
    - **Marriage:** Dec. 30, 1786, to **Mary Crawford** (his cousin, daughter of Patrick Crawford)
    - **Children:**
        - **Sarah Crawford**, m. Charles McClung
        - **Elizabeth Crawford**, m. Samuel McClung; lived in Greenbrier Co.
        - **James Crawford** (never married)
        - **William Crawford** (never married)
        - **John Crawford**, m. Jan. 1819, Margaret Bell (daughter of William Bell)
        - **George Crawford** (died in infancy)
        - **Mary “Polly” Crawford** (posthumous child), m. John Allen
    - *Notes:*
        - Will dated 1798
        - Executor case: *Crawford vs. Crawford*, 1821 (Chalkley, Vol. 2, p. 259)
        - By 1821, Sarah and Polly were deceased; widow Mary lived with daughter Elizabeth in Greenbrier Co.
2. **[Unnamed Daughter]**
    - **Marriage:** Col. Andrew Anderson (1st wife)
    - **Death:** Aug. 12, 1786
    - *Notes:*
        - Col. Anderson gave deposition Oct. 29, 1818, confirming marriage to George Crawford’s eldest daughter in Staunton, VA

        - Anderson remarried Martha Crawford (daughter of Patrick) in 1788
3. **John Crawford**
    - No detailed record or descendants listed
4. **George Crawford Jr.**
    - **Military:** Served in the Revolutionary War
    - **Noted Dates:**
        - July 18, 1786 – received compensation for gun lost in service
        - 1799 – exempted from levy due to age and infirmity
    - *Note:* This entry could refer to **George Sr.** rather than a son; identification is uncertain
5. William Crawford
    - Will recorded: June 3, 1783, in Rockbridge Co., VA
    - Spouse: Mary
    - Children:
    - George Crawford
    - William Crawford
    - John Crawford
    - Eleanor Crawford
    - Isabell Crawford
    - Mary Crawford
    - Elizabeth Crawford
6. Sarah Crawford
    - Marriage: Robert Crawford (her cousin, son of Alexander Crawford)
    - Children:
    - George Crawford
    - Elizabeth Crawford
    - Hugh Crawford
    - James Crawford
    - Jane Crawford
    - Robert Crawford
    - William Crawford
    - John Crawford
    - Note: “There were perhaps other children

I continued asking ChatGPT to pull family information. This time for the family of Patrick Crawford.

Family Group: Patrick Crawford & Sarah Wilson

Patrick Crawford

- **Birth:** Born in Ireland
- **Migration:** From Pennsylvania to Augusta County, Virginia, ca. 1750 (per Waddell)
- **Spouse: Sarah Wilson**
- **Children:** *Nine total – five daughters, four sons*

Daughters:

1. **Martha Crawford**
    - **Baptized:** 1748
    - **Note:** Probably died young
2. **Elizabeth Crawford**
    - **Born:** Oct. 18, 1751
    - **Marriage:** Alexander Robertson
3. **Peggy (Margaret) Crawford**
    - **Marriage:** John Crawford (son of George Crawford)
4. **[Unnamed] Daughter**

    - **Marriage:** James McChesney
    - **Issue:** Son named George
5. **Martha Crawford**
    - **Born:** May 10, 1761
    - **Marriage:** March 13, 1788, to Col. Andrew Anderson (his second wife)
    - *Note:* His first wife was her cousin, a daughter of George Crawford, who died in 1786
6. **Mary Crawford**
    - **Marriage:** December 30, 1786, to James Crawford (eldest son of George Crawford)

Sons:

1. **George Crawford**
    - **Born:** October 1, 1754
    - **Marriage:** June 23, 1788, to Nancy Winter (daughter of William & Ann (Boone) Winter)
    - **Children:**
        - Nancy Crawford, m. John Miller
        - Hannah Crawford, m. Harry Miller
        - Sarah Crawford, m. James Bell (his 2nd wife)
        - Jane Crawford, m. Franklin McCue
        - Martha Crawford, m. Peter Hanger
        - Polly Crawford, m. James Bourland, Sept. 17, 1812
        - Margaret Crawford, m. James Walker
    - *Chalkley Vol. 1, p. 427 notes:* George Crawford died intestate; “Peggy a minor”; Nancy (who married John Miller) not listed in deed
2. **Maj. John Crawford**
    - **Born:** March 29, 1764
    - **Marriage:** July 5, 1791, to Rebecca Allen (daughter of Capt. James Allen)
    - **Children:**
        - Elizabeth, m. Capt. William Ingles
        - Sarah, m. John Hyde
        - Margaret, m. Cyrus Hyde (his 1st wife)
        - Maj. James Crawford, m. Cynthia McClung
        - John, m. Harriet McClung
        - George W. (never married)
        - Ann, m. Franklin McCue (his 2nd wife)
        - Mary, m. Edward Moorman
        - Rebecca, m. Stewart McClung
    - *Note:* Patrick and sons George & John appear on the 1781 Tithables list
3. **William Crawford**
    - **Born:** August 6, 1767
    - **Marriage:** Nancy Smith (daughter of Abraham Smith)
    - **Children:**
        - Benjamin, m. Magdalen Cochran
            - Issue: Elizabeth, James
        - Nancy, m. Col. James Crawford of Culpeper
            - Issue: Addison, Benjamin
        - James (died unmarried)
        - John, m. Mary Allen
        - George
        - William
        - Six daughters (names not given)
4. **James Crawford**
    - **Born:** August 6, 1767 (listed as second son of Patrick)
    - **Marriage:** Miss McClung of Greenbrier
    - **Children:**

        - John H. Crawford, m. Mrs. Tirkle (née Rice)
        - Wm. H. Crawford, m. Miss McChesney (of Rockbridge Co.)
        - Edward Crawford, m. daughter of William Crawford of Stone Church
        - James Crawford (moved to Texas; descendants unknown)
        - Marshall Crawford, m. daughter of Alexander Crawford of Crawford’s Springs, Augusta Co.

Page 61 contains information about the family of William Crawford. Below is the ChatGPT generated family listing.

Family Group: William Crawford (son of Patrick Crawford)

Husband: William Crawford

- **Relationship:** 5th son of Patrick Crawford
- **Marriages:**
    1. **Margaret Bouland** (daughter of James Bouland)
    2. **Sarah Bouland** (sister of Margaret; no issue from this marriage)

Children with 1st wife, Margaret Bouland:

1. **James Crawford**
    - **Marriage:** Mary Miller (daughter of William Miller)
2. **Sarah Crawford**
    - **Marriage:** E. C. Crawford
3. **Ann Crawford**
    - **Status:** Unmarried
4. **George Crawford**
    - **Marriage:** Lillie Parkins
        - **Lillie’s family:** Daughter of Isaac Parkins and granddaughter of Col. Samuel Harnsberger
5. **Benjamin Crawford**
    - **Status:** Unmarried

Page 62 discusses Crawfords found in the early records of Warren County involving Alexander, Thomas, Samuel and Oliver. The article speculates that these are sons of Samuel Crawford, Sr. Below is the family information pulled by ChatGPT for these families.

Family Group: Thomas Crawford (d. 1811, Warren Co., Ohio)

Husband: Thomas Crawford

- **Death:** 1811 (Warren County, Ohio)
- **Land:** Purchased 106⅔ acres in Deerfield Twp., Warren Co., June 2, 1801 (from John Cleve Symmes, Sec. 22-T1-R2)
- **Estate:** Administration granted Oct. 24, 1811; guardianship for minor children assigned Feb. 19, 1812

Known Children:

1. **Alexander Crawford** (minor in 1812)
2. **Andrew Crawford** (minor in 1812)
3. **John Crawford** (minor in 1812)
4. **Ruth Crawford**, m. **Clark Baker** (April 1, 1813)

    Note: In 1825, a deed (Book 12, p. 128) refers to heirs of Thomas Crawford as “Clark Baker and Ruth his wife, late Ruth Crawford,” John Crawford, and Alexander Crawford.

Family Group: Alexander Crawford (Warren Co., Ohio)

Husband: Alexander Crawford

- **Spouse:** Catharine (surname unknown)
- **Land:** Involved in many deeds; one with wife Catharine to Jesse Hutchinson (Book 13, p. 60)
- **Death of Wife:** Catharine died 1828, age 57 (b. 1771); buried in the old cemetery in Lebanon, OH
- **Children:** *No children are listed*

  Note: No record of descendants mentioned in the text

Family Group: Samuel Crawford, Jr. & Charity Scofield

Husband: Samuel Crawford, Jr.

- **Parentage:** Son of Samuel Crawford who settled in Ohio by 1790
- **Marriage:** Jan. 5, 1815, to **Charity Scofield** (b. 1797 in Deerfield Twp., OH)
- **Death:** February 1836
  - **Administrator:** Samuel Clark (appointed Feb. 29, 1836)
  - **Guardian:** Charity appointed guardian for minor children (Oct. 16, 1837)

Children:

1. **Ruth Crawford**
2. **Oliver Crawford**
3. **Joseph Crawford**
4. **Thomas Crawford**
5. **Jane Crawford**
6. **Samuel Crawford**
7. **John Crawford**
8. **Andrew Crawford**

Family Group: Oliver Crawford & Margaret “Peggy” Neely

Husband: Oliver Crawford

- **Born:** February 27, 1779
- **Died:** January 18, 1827
- **Marriage:** May 7, 1811, in Warren County, Ohio

Wife: Margaret “Peggy” Neely

- **Born:** March 8, 1780
- **Died:** January 16, 1851
- **Parents:** John Neely & Jane Neely
- **Second Marriage:** April 22, 1830, to **Samuel R. Bell** (b. June 17, 1784 – d. November 23, 1842)
- **Burial:** Both Margaret and Oliver are buried at Zoar Cemetery

---

Children of Oliver & Margaret (Neely) Crawford:

1. **Jane Crawford**
   - **Born:** January 31, 1812
2. **Judith Crawford**
   - **Born:** March 16, 1813

3. **Sarah Crawford**
    - **Born:** June 1, 1816
    - **Died:** March 17, 1881
4. **Samuel Crawford**
    - **Born:** July 24, 1819
    - **Died:** September 18, 1879
5. **John N. Crawford**
    - **Born:** January 26, 1823
    - **Died:** May 6, 1876
6. **Ruth Ann Crawford**
    - **Born:** November 13, 1825
    - **Died:** January 21, 1887

The bottom half of page 63 contains information about the Robert Crawford, Sr. family of Miami County, Ohio. Below is the family information as identifed by ChatGPT.

Family Group: Robert Crawford, Sr. & Hannah Mears

Husband: Robert Crawford, Sr.

- **Born:** 1735
- **Died:** 1817
- **Will dated:** May 19, 1817
- **Burial:** Crawford Cemetery, Bethel Township, Miami County, Ohio

Wife: Hannah Mears

- **Born:** 1738
- **Died:** 1831
- **Burial:** Crawford Cemetery, Bethel Township

Children:

1. **Robert C. Crawford**
    - **Born:** 1771
    - **Died:** 1842
    - **Will recorded:** September 24, 1842
    - **Spouse:** Polly (possibly Mary; burial record shows Mary Crawford, 1782–1841)
    - **Children:**
        - **Robert C. Crawford (Jr.)**
        - **Samuel Crawford**
        - **John B. Crawford**
        - **Joseph Crawford**
        - **James Crawford**
        - **George W. Crawford**
        - **Nancy Crawford**
        - **Eliza Crawford** (mother of unnamed children)
2. **James Lee Crawford**
    - No additional details provided
3. **John H. Crawford**
    - No additional details provided
4. **Charlotte Crawford**, m. **Mr. Morrison**
    - **Death:** August 17, 1841, aged 75 years, 2 months, 5 days
    - **Burial:** New Carlisle Cemetery

Grandchildren:

- **Andrew Crawford** (mentioned as grandson in Robert Sr.’s will; parent not specified)

Other Burials:

- **Mary Crawford**, wife of Robert C. Crawford (Jr.?), d. July 18, 1843, aged 28 yrs, 2 mo, 2 days (New Carlisle Cemetery)
- **James Crawford**, 1816–1845 (likely a grandson; buried in Crawford Cemetery, Bethel Twp.)

Crawford Family Article

By Marcia Crawford Philbrick
June 26, 2025
[Augusta County](#),[Crawford](#)
https://heartlandgenealogy.org/2025/06/26/crawford-family-article/

HEARTLAND
GENEALOGY
CRAWFORD
FAMILY

As mentioned in earlier posts, I have a photocopy of an article about the Crawford family. My handwritten note at the top identifies the source as *Miami Valley Genealogies, Vol. 2: Families A–K*. However, despite extensive searching, I've been unable to locate a copy of this publication or verify the citation. I'm sharing the article here in hopes that other researchers may recognize the source and help confirm or improve the reference.

> Miami Valley Genealogies
> Vol. 2
> Families A-K
>
> Page 49
>
> CRAWFORD
>
> It has been well established that the Crawford family, early settlers of Augusta County, Virginia, settled first in Pennsylvania. From Virginia they removed to Kentucky, Ohio and Missouri.
>
> Waddell, in his "Annals of Augusta County" and Peyton, in his "History of Augusta County" give short records of this family and by referring to the court records of Augusta County, three volumes by Chalkley, a fairly complete record is compiled.
>
> The first mention of this family in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, is when Ann Crawford, a widow, mother of Patrick, James, George and Alexander, is granted 200 acres of land, Mar. 31, 1736. The son James was

granted 200 acres on the same date. This is the James Crawford, merchant, who later settled on Middle River, Augusta County, Virginia. A suit in Augusta County shows that Alexander Crawford was a resident of Lancaster Co., Pa., another suit shows the family lived near the mouth of Octoraro Creek in Lancaster County.

In Chalkley, Vol. I, p. 82, we find that Alexander Crawford was in Virginia in 1746 and Aug. 19, 1758 was added to the tithables of Augusta County. There may have been two other brothers, as Thomas Crawford was added to the list of tithables, Aug. 26, 1750 (Chalkley, Vol. I, p. 41) and William was there in 1755, and guardian for the children of Alexander in 1768 (Same p147).

On Aug. 12, 1747, George Crawford was appointed "Overseer of the Road" (same p 30) Aug. 24, 1754 (p 65) Patrick is defendant in a suit; and that James Crawford died in 1751 (p370) "possessed of considerable estate." There was also a sister, Marry, who married John Poage or Pogue. Her brother Patrick gives consent.

Alexander Crawford was a large land owner and at the time of his death possessed 1640 acres. His wife was Mary McPheeters and they were both killed by Indians, the exact date not known, but in 1764. William McPheeters was the Administrator. They had issue:

John Crawford, born 1741, died Jan. 1832, age 91 years. He served through the Revolution, from Point Pleasant to Yorktown, (Waddell, p 462) and is buried in Hebron Church yard. He married (1) Peggy Crawford, daughter of Patrick; she died Feb. 1788, as her estate was administered by John Feb. 19, 1788. They had one daughter, Margaret, who married Daniel Fall, Aug. 30, 1797 and removed to Ohio. John married (2) Mary Craig and had issue five children, among them a son Samuel and a daughter Mary, who married Samuel Gillespie.

John married (3) Feb. 24, 1797, Sarah Newman of Fredericksburg and hand issue, James, William and John, all to Missouri; and daughters Nancy, wife of Leroy Newman and Fanny, who married Henry Pippetoe. The migration to Missouri was in 1838.

Alexander Crawford Jr. served in the Revolution and died June 19, 1830. He married (1) — Hopkins and had issue — Polly, Betsy, Kittie and Sally.

(2) the widow McClure and had issue — James, William, George, Samuel, Robert, William. George and Samuel died young.

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Edward Crawford, graduated from Princeton Theological Seminary in 1775, a Presbyterian Minister.

James Crawford, also a Presbyterian Minister, removed to Kentucky.

Rebecca Crawford married John Sawyer and removed to Kentucky. He was born in 1753 and in Chalkley, Vol. 1, p 148, find "Mar. 19,1768, Rebecca Crawford, daughter of Alexander, chose William Crawford her guardian

Mary Crawford, no record except that William Crawford is guardian.

Martha Crawford, married Alexander Craig. All her children went west.

Robert Crawford, married Sarah Crawford, a cousin, daughter of George Crawford, His will recorded Oct.29,1810, names wife Sarah and children, George, Elizabeth, Hugh, Jane, James, Robert, William and John.
Chalkley, Vol.1 p 155, "Mar.21,1769, William McPheeters, Jr., guardian for Alexander and Robert, orphans of Alexander Crawford dec'd."

Samuel Crawford, probably the youngest child of Alexander and Mary (McPheeters) Crawford, was born in 1759, as Mar. 17, 1773, Samuel Crawford, age 14 years, orphan of Alexander Crawford, chose Samuel

McPheeters guardian."
(Same p 170) This is perhaps the Samuel, who married Oct. 9, 1790, Elizabeth Craig, Elizabeth Craig and left a will recorded in 1795, his son William and a brother James.

James Crawford settled on Middle River, Augusta County, where he died in 1751; his wife was Elizabeth Robertson, sister of William Robertson; issue –

Jane Crawford, who married, 1769, James Brown.

James Crawford, Jr., who qualified as a Justice, Apr. 28, 1785. Chalkley, Vol. 1, p 370, "May 1774, James Brown and Jane his wife, married July 1769, late Jane Crawford, daughter of James Crawford, who died 1751, possessed of considerable estate, leaving a widow, Elizabeth and two children, Jane (above) and James."

Elizabeth Crawford, nee Robertson, a sister of William Robertson. James Sr. had a brother Patrick Crawford.

George Crawford was in Virginia as early as 1747, when he was appointed Overseer of the Road. He died between 1780-84; the name of his wife is not known and the list of his children is not complete; those known –

James Crawford, the oldest son died in 1798; he married, Dec. 30, 1786, Mary Crawford, a cousin, (daughter of Patrick) and had issue –

Sarah, married Charles McClung.

James Crawford, never married.

William Crawford never married

John, married, Jan. 1819, Margaret Bell (dau. of Wm.)

George, died inf.

Elizabeth, married Samuel McClung.

Mary, born after father's death; married John Allen.

Chalkley, Vol. 2, p. 259, Crawford vs Crawford, 1821; William Bell and Margaret Crawford, executors of James Crawford, who died in Augusta County, will dated 1798, leaving six children, four sons and two daughters. A daughter born after his death, son George died as infant; William never married; Sarah married Charles

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Clung; Elizabeth, married Samuel McClung; Polly, posthumous daughter, married John Allen, Sarah and Polly are dead (1821); Mary the widow lives with her daughter Elizabeth in Greenbrier County.

John Crawford, no record.

George Crawford Jr., served in the Revolution and July 18, 1786 (Vol. 1, p 246) is allowed for a gun lost in service and in 1799 (p. 292) is exempt from levy because of age and infirmity. (Could this be George Sr.?)

Daughter, married Col. Andrew Anderson, as his first wife; she died Aug. 12, 1786 and he married (2) Mar. 13, 1788, her cousin, Martha Crawford, daughter of Patrick. (Chalkley, Vol. 2, p. 206) "Col. Andrew Anderson deposes, Oct. 29, 1818, that he married in Staunton, the oldest daughter of George Crawford of Augusta, who died Aug. 12, 1786."

William Crawford, will recorded in Rockbridge County, June 3, 1783; names wife Mary; sons, George, William, John; daughters, Eleanor, Isabel, Mary, Elizabeth.

Sarah Crawford, married her cousin, Robert Crawford, son of Alexander; had issue – George, Elizabeth, Hugh, James, Jane, Robert, William, John.

Patrick Crawford was born in Ireland, and came first to Pennsylvania and removed from there to Augusta County, Virginia in about 1750 (Waddell). His wife was Sarah Wilson; issue, four sons and five daughters. The daughters were:

Martha, baptized 1748, probably died young.

Elizabeth, born Oct 18, 1751, married Alexander Roberton.

Peggy, married John Crawford, son of George.

Daughter, married James McChesney; had son George

Martha, born May 10, 1761, married, Mar. 13, 1788, Col. Andrew Anderson as his second wife; his first wife was her cousin, a daughter of George, she died 1786.

Mary, married, Dec. 30, 1786, James Crawford, oldest son of George.

The sons were —

George Crawford, born Oct. 1, 1754, married, June 23, 1788, Nancy Winter (dau. of Wm. And Anne (Boone) Winer); issue:

Nancy Crawford married John Miller

Hannah Crawford married Harry Miller.

Sarah Crawford married James Bell is 2nd wife.

Jane Crawford married Franklin McCue

Martha Crawford married Peter Hanger.

Polly Crawford, married James Hourland, Sept. 17, 1812

Peggy Crawford married James Walker

The above from Chalkley, Vol. 1, p. 427; “George Crawford died intestate leaving six children etc. “Peggy a minor”. Nancy, who married John Miller not in deed.

John Crawford, (Maj. John), born Mar. 29, 1764, married, July 5, 179[0], Rebecca Allen, daughter of Capt. James; issue –

Elizabeth married Capt. William Ingles.

Sarah, married John Hyde.

Margaret, married Cyrus Hyde, his 1st wife.

James, married Cynthia McClung.

John, married Harriet McClung.

George W, never married.

Ann., married Franklin McCue, his 2nd wife.

Mary married Edward Moorman.

Rebecca married Stewart McClung.

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William Crawford, born Aug. 6, 1767, married Nancy Smith, daughter of Abraham Smith; issue –

Benjamin, James, John, George, William and six daughters.

Benjamin, married Magdalena Cochran; issue –

Elizabeth, James, Nancy, who married Col. James Crawford of Culpeper; Addison and Benjamin.

James, never married.

John, married Mary Allen.

James Crawford, born Aug. 6, 1757, named as the second son of Patrick, married –_ McClung of Greenbrier; issue –

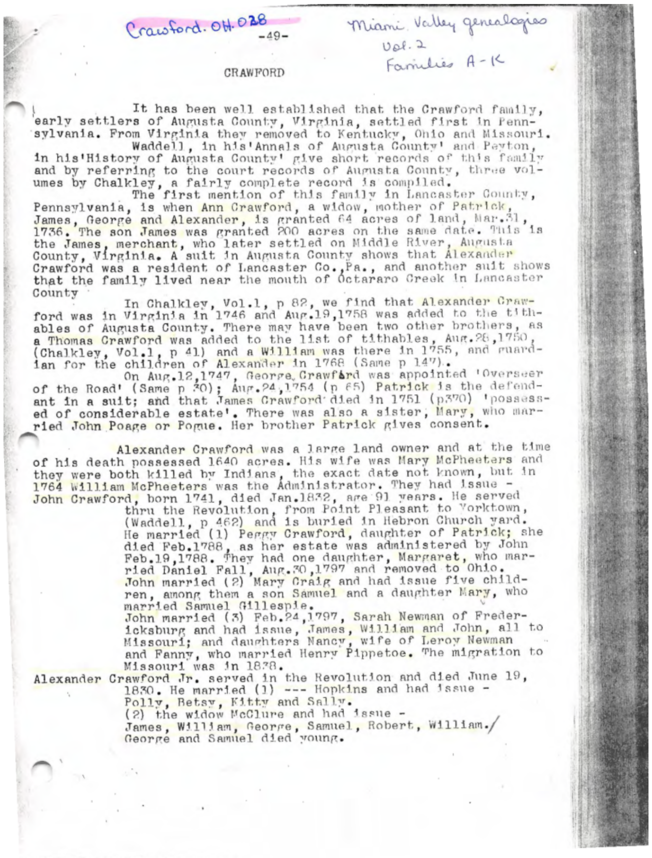
John H., married Mrs. Trirkle, nee Rice.

William, – married McChesney of Rockbridge Co.

Edward, -married dau. of William Crawford.

James, removed to Texas.

Marshall, – married dau. of Alexander Crawford of Crawford Springs, Augusta Co



Crawford. OH. 028

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Miami Valley genealogies
Vol. 2
Families A - K

CRAWFORD

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In Chalkley, Vol.1, p 82, we find that Alexander Crawford was in Virginia in 1746 and Aug.19,1758 was added to the tithables of Augusta County. There may have been two other brothers, as a Thomas Crawford was added to the list of tithables, Aug.28,1750, (Chalkley, Vol.1, p 41) and a William was there in 1755, and guardian for the children of Alexander in 1768 (Same p 147).

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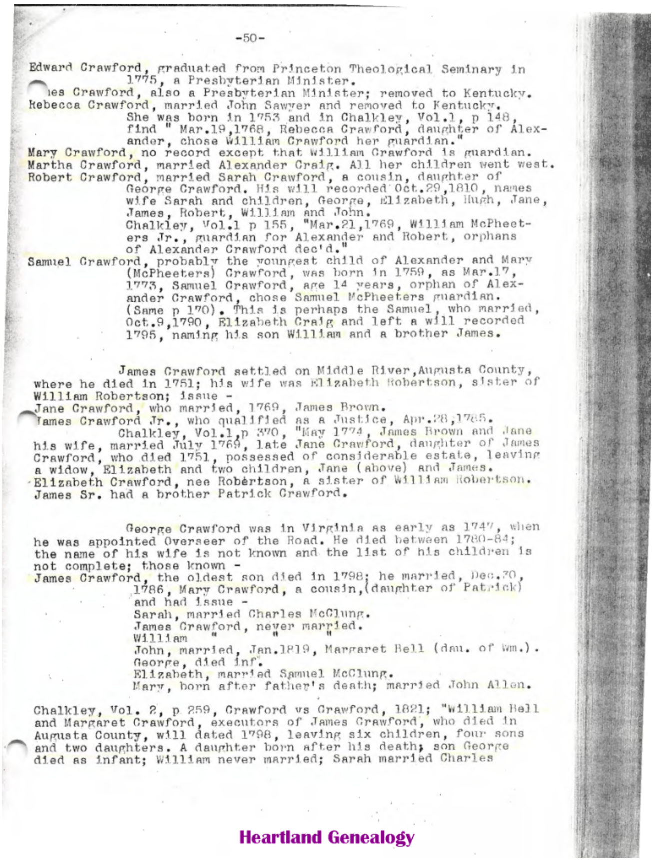
Alexander Crawford Jr. served in the Revolution and died June 19, 1830. He married (1) --- Hopkins and had issue -
Polly, Betsy, Kitty and Sally.
(2) the widow McClure and had issue -
James, William, George, Samuel, Robert, William./
George and Samuel died young.

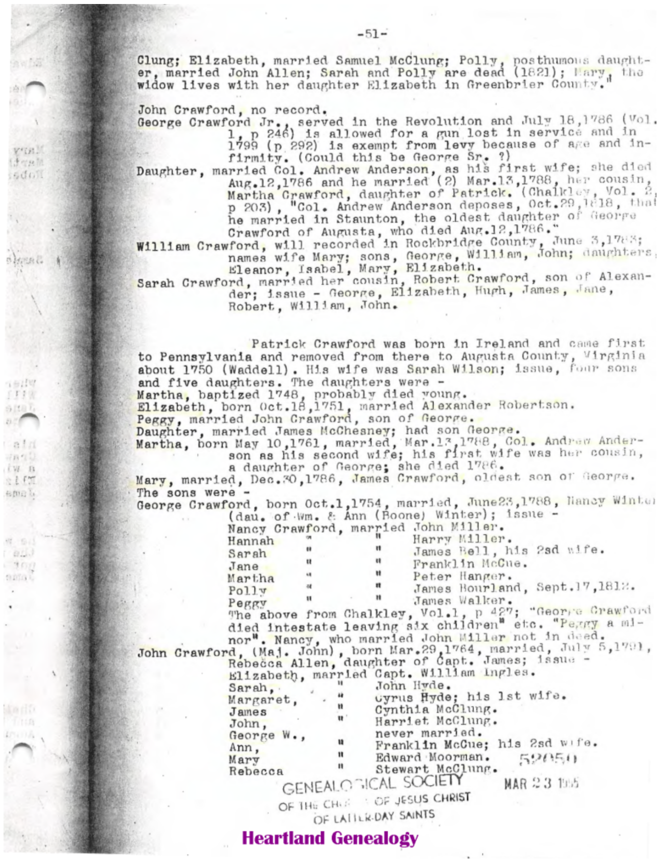


Edward Crawford, graduated from Princeton Theological Seminary in 1775, a Presbyterian Minister.
[illegible]es Crawford, also a Presbyterian Minister; removed to Kentucky.
Rebecca Crawford, married John Sawyer and removed to Kentucky.
She was born in 1753 and in Chalkley, Vol.1, p 148, find " Mar.19,1768, Rebecca Crawford, daughter of Alexander, chose William Crawford her guardian."
Mary Crawford, no record except that William Crawford is guardian.
Martha Crawford, married Alexander Craig. All her children went west.
Robert Crawford, married Sarah Crawford, a cousin, daughter of George Crawford. His will recorded Oct.29,1810, names wife Sarah and children, George, Elizabeth, Hugh, Jane, James, Robert, William and John.
Chalkley, Vol.1 p 155, "Mar.21,1769, William McPheeters Jr., guardian for Alexander and Robert, orphans of Alexander Crawford dec'd."
Samuel Crawford, probably the youngest child of Alexander and Mary (McPheeters) Crawford, was born in 1759, as Mar.17, 1773, Samuel Crawford, age 14 years, orphan of Alexander Crawford, chose Samuel McPheeters guardian. (Same p 170). This is perhaps the Samuel, who married, Oct.9,1790, Elizabeth Craig and left a will recorded 1795, naming his son William and a brother James.

James Crawford settled on Middle River,Augusta County, where he died in 1751; his wife was Elizabeth Robertson, sister of William Robertson; issue -
Jane Crawford, who married, 1769, James Brown.
James Crawford Jr., who qualified as a Justice, Apr.28,1785.
Chalkley, Vol.1,p 370, "May 1774, James Brown and Jane his wife, married July 1769, late Jane Crawford, daughter of James Crawford, who died 1751, possessed of considerable estate, leaving a widow, Elizabeth and two children, Jane (above) and James.
Elizabeth Crawford, nee Robertson, a sister of William Robertson.
James Sr. had a brother Patrick Crawford.

George Crawford was in Virginia as early as 1747, when he was appointed Overseer of the Road. He died between 1780-84; the name of his wife is not known and the list of his children is not complete; those known -
James Crawford, the oldest son died in 1798; he married, Dec.30, 1786, Mary Crawford, a cousin,(daughter of Patrick) and had issue -
Sarah, married Charles McClung.
James Crawford, never married.
William " " "
John, married, Jan.1819, Margaret Bell (dau. of Wm.).
George, died inf.
Elizabeth, married Samuel McClung.
Mary, born after father's death; married John Allen.

Chalkley, Vol. 2, p 259, Crawford vs Crawford, 1821; "William Bell and Margaret Crawford, executors of James Crawford, who died in Augusta County, will dated 1798, leaving six children, four sons and two daughters. A daughter born after his death; son George died as infant; William never married; Sarah married Charles



Clung; Elizabeth, married Samuel McClung; Polly, posthumous daughter, married John Allen; Sarah and Polly are dead (1821); Mary, the widow lives with her daughter Elizabeth in Greenbrier County."

John Crawford, no record.
George Crawford Jr., served in the Revolution and July 18,1786 (Vol. 1, p 246) is allowed for a gun lost in service and in 1799 (p 292) is exempt from levy because of age and infirmity. (Could this be George Sr. ?)
Daughter, married Col. Andrew Anderson, as his first wife; she died Aug.12,1786 and he married (2) Mar.13,1788, her cousin, Martha Crawford, daughter of Patrick. (Chalkley, Vol. 2, p 203), "Col. Andrew Anderson deposes, Oct.29,1818, tha he married in Staunton, the oldest daughter of George Crawford of Augusta, who died Aug.12,1786."
William Crawford, will recorded in Rockbridge County, June 3,1783; names wife Mary; sons, George, William, John; daughters, Eleanor, Isabel, Mary, Elizabeth.
Sarah Crawford, married her cousin, Robert Crawford, son of Alexander; issue - George, Elizabeth, Hugh, James, Jane, Robert, William, John.

Patrick Crawford was born in Ireland and came first to Pennsylvania and removed from there to Augusta County, Virginia about 1750 (Waddell). His wife was Sarah Wilson; issue, four sons and five daughters. The daughters were -
Martha, baptized 1748, probably died young.
Elizabeth, born Oct.18,1751, married Alexander Robertson.
Peggy, married John Crawford, son of George.
Daughter, married James McChesney; had son George.
Martha, born May 10,1761, married, Mar.13,1788, Col. Andrew Anderson as his second wife; his first wife was her cousin, a daughter of George; she died 1786.
Mary, married, Dec.30,1786, James Crawford, oldest son of George.
The sons were -
George Crawford, born Oct.1,1754, married, June23,1788, Nancy Winte (dau. of Wm. & Ann (Boone) Winter); issue -
Nancy Crawford, married John Miller.
Hannah " " Harry Miller.
Sarah " " James Bell, his 2sd wife.
Jane " " Franklin McCue.
Martha " " Peter Hanger.
Polly " " James Bourland, Sept.17,1812.
Peggy " " James Walker.
The above from Chalkley, Vol.1, p 427; "George Crawford died intestate leaving six children" etc. "Peggy a minor". Nancy, who married John Miller not in deed.
John Crawford, (Maj. John), born Mar.29,1764, married, July 5,1791, Rebecca Allen, daughter of Capt. James; issue -
Elizabeth, married Capt. William Ingles.
Sarah, " John Hyde.
Margaret, " Cyrus Hyde; his 1st wife.
James " Cynthia McClung.
John, " Harriet McClung.
George W., never married.
Ann, " Franklin McCue; his 2sd wife.
Mary " Edward Moorman.
Rebecca " Stewart McClung.

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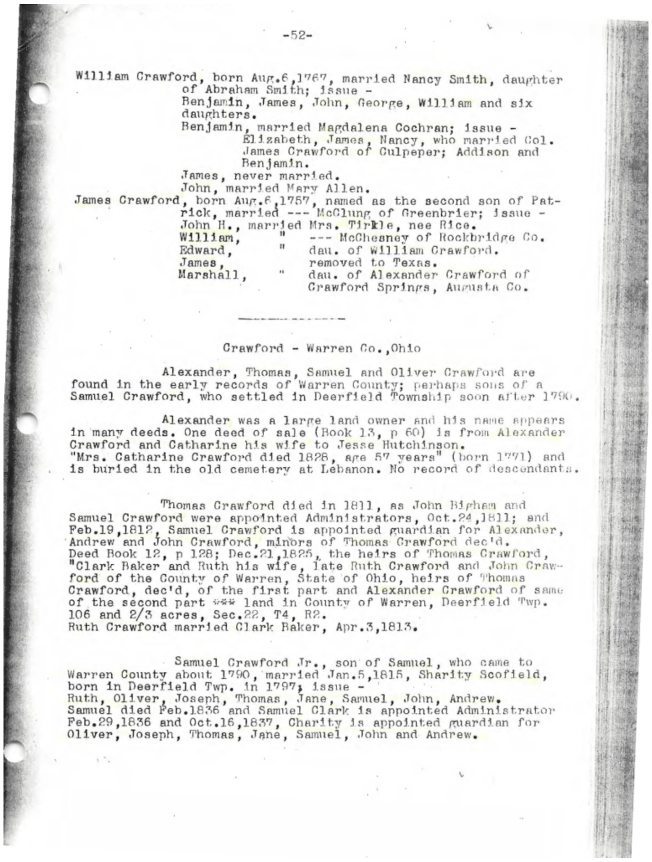
GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS MAR 23 1955



-52-

William Crawford, born Aug.6,1767, married Nancy Smith, daughter
of Abraham Smith; issue -
Benjamin, James, John, George, William and six daughters.
Benjamin, married Magdalena Cochran; issue -
Elizabeth, James, Nancy, who married Col. James Crawford of Culpeper; Addison and Benjamin.
James, never married.
John, married Mary Allen.
James Crawford, born Aug.6,1757, named as the second son of Patrick, married --- McClung of Greenbrier; issue -
John H., married Mrs. Tirkle, nee Rice.
William, " --- McChesney of Rockbridge Co.
Edward, " dau. of William Crawford.
James, removed to Texas.
Marshall, " dau. of Alexander Crawford of Crawford Springs, Augusta Co.

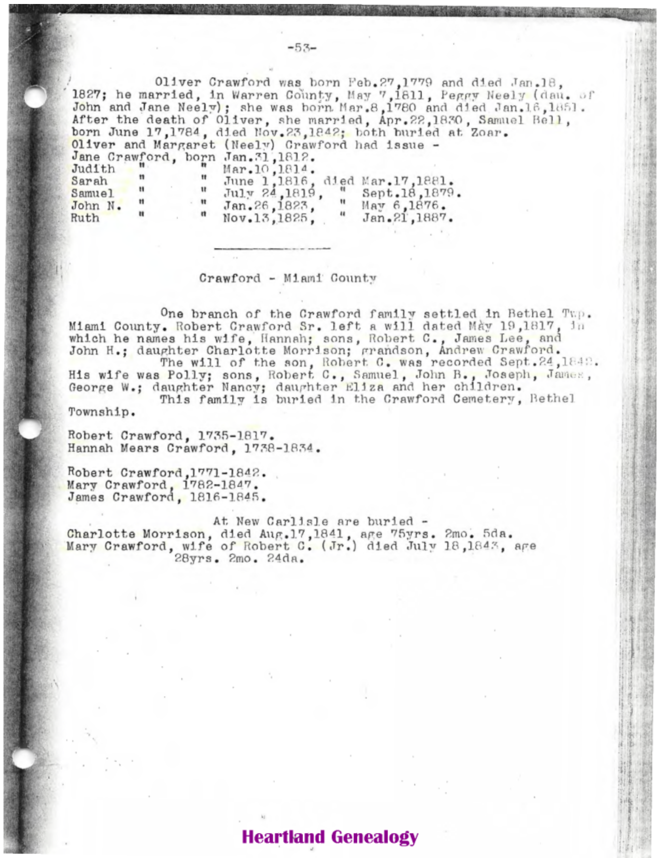
Crawford - Warren Co.,Ohio

Alexander, Thomas, Samuel and Oliver Crawford are found in the early records of Warren County; perhaps sons of a Samuel Crawford, who settled in Deerfield Township soon after 1790.

Alexander was a large land owner and his name appears in many deeds. One deed of sale (Book 13, p 60) is from Alexander Crawford and Catharine his wife to Jesse Hutchinson.
"Mrs. Catharine Crawford died 1828, age 57 years" (born 1771) and is buried in the old cemetery at Lebanon. No record of descendants.

Thomas Crawford died in 1811, as John Bigham and Samuel Crawford were appointed Administrators, Oct.24,1811; and Feb.19,1812, Samuel Crawford is appointed guardian for Alexander, Andrew and John Crawford, minors of Thomas Crawford dec'd.
Deed Book 12, p 128; Dec.21,1825, the heirs of Thomas Crawford, "Clark Baker and Ruth his wife, late Ruth Crawford and John Crawford of the County of Warren, State of Ohio, heirs of Thomas Crawford, dec'd, of the first part and Alexander Crawford of same of the second part *** land in County of Warren, Deerfield Twp. 106 and 2/3 acres, Sec.22, T4, R2.
Ruth Crawford married Clark Baker, Apr.3,1813.

Samuel Crawford Jr., son of Samuel, who came to Warren County about 1790, married Jan.5,1815, Sharity Scofield, born in Deerfield Twp. in 1797; issue -
Ruth, Oliver, Joseph, Thomas, Jane, Samuel, John, Andrew.
Samuel died Feb.1836 and Samuel Clark is appointed Administrator Feb.29,1836 and Oct.16,1837, Charity is appointed guardian for Oliver, Joseph, Thomas, Jane, Samuel, John and Andrew.



-53-

Oliver Crawford was born Feb.27,1779 and died Jan.18, 1827; he married, in Warren County, May 7,1811, Peggy Neely (dau. of John and Jane Neely); she was born Mar.8,1780 and died Jan.16,1851. After the death of Oliver, she married, Apr.22,1830, Samuel Bell, born June 17,1784, died Nov.23,1842; both buried at Zoar.
Oliver and Margaret (Neely) Crawford had issue -
Jane Crawford, born Jan.31,1812.
Judith " " Mar.10,1814.
Sarah " " June 1,1816, died Mar.17,1881.
Samuel " " July 24,1819, " Sept.18,1879.
John N. " " Jan.26,1823, " May 6,1876.
Ruth " " Nov.13,1825, " Jan.21,1887.

Crawford - Miami County

One branch of the Crawford family settled in Bethel Twp. Miami County. Robert Crawford Sr. left a will dated May 19,1817, in which he names his wife, Hannah; sons, Robert C., James Lee, and John H.; daughter Charlotte Morrison; grandson, Andrew Crawford.

The will of the son, Robert C. was recorded Sept.24,1842. His wife was Polly; sons, Robert C., Samuel, John B., Joseph, James, George W.; daughter Nancy; daughter Eliza and her children.

This family is buried in the Crawford Cemetery, Bethel Township.

Robert Crawford, 1735-1817.
Hannah Mears Crawford, 1738-1834.

Robert Crawford,1771-1842.
Mary Crawford, 1782-1847.
James Crawford, 1816-1845.

At New Carlisle are buried -
Charlotte Morrison, died Aug.17,1841, age 75yrs. 2mo. 5da.
Mary Crawford, wife of Robert C. (Jr.) died July 18,1843, age 28yrs. 2mo. 24da.

I then asked ChatGPT to pull the family groups from this article. Below is the unedited response from ChatGPT.

1. Ann Crawford (widow)

Children:

- **Patrick Crawford** (see separate group)
- **James Crawford** (merchant; d. 1751 in Augusta Co., VA)
- **George Crawford** (d. between 1780–84)
- **Alexander Crawford** (killed 1764; see below)
- Possibly **Thomas Crawford** (tithable 1750)
- Possibly **William Crawford** (tithable 1755; guardian in 1768)
- **Mary Crawford**, m. John Poage/Pogue (Patrick gave consent)

---

2. Alexander Crawford & Mary McPheeters

Death: Both killed by Indians ca. 1764
Administrator: William McPheeters
Children:

- **John Crawford** (b. 1741–d. 1832), m. (1) Peggy Crawford; (2) Mary Craig; (3) Sarah Newman
    - Children: Margaret (m. Daniel Fall), Samuel, Mary (m. Samuel Gillespie), James, William, John, Nancy (m. Leroy Newman), Fanny (m. Henry Pippetoe)
- **Alexander Crawford Jr.** (d. June 19, 1830), m. (1) — Hopkins; m. (2) widow McClure
    - Children (by Hopkins): Polly, Betsy, Kittie, Sally
    - Children (by McClure): James, William, George†, Samuel†, Robert, William
- **Edward Crawford** – Presbyterian minister, Princeton Theological Seminary grad, 1775
- **James Crawford** – Presbyterian minister; moved to Kentucky
- **Rebecca Crawford**, m. John Sawyer (moved to Kentucky)
- **Mary Crawford** – no further record; guardian: William Crawford
- **Martha Crawford**, m. Alexander Craig; children went west
- **Robert Crawford**, m. Sarah Crawford (daughter of George)
    - Children: George, Elizabeth, Hugh, Jane, James, Robert, William, John
- **Samuel Crawford** (b. 1759), m. Oct. 9, 1790, Elizabeth Craig
    - Son: William
    - Mentions brother James in will (1795)

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3. James Crawford (merchant) & Elizabeth Robertson

Died: 1751
Wife: Elizabeth Robertson (sister of William Robertson)
Children:

- **Jane Crawford**, m. 1769, James Brown
- **James Crawford Jr.**, qualified as Justice in 1785

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4. George Crawford (d. 1780–84)

Children (wife unknown):

- **James Crawford** (d. 1798), m. Dec. 30, 1786, Mary Crawford (daughter of Patrick)
    - Children: Sarah (m. Charles McClung), James, William, John (m. Margaret Bell), George†, Elizabeth (m. Samuel McClung), Mary “Polly” (m. John Allen)
- **Unnamed daughter**, m. Col. Andrew Anderson (d. Aug. 12, 1786)
- **John Crawford** – no record

- **George Crawford Jr.** – served in Revolution; possibly same as George Sr.
- **William Crawford**, will proved 1783 in Rockbridge Co.; wife: Mary
    - Children: George, William, John, Eleanor, Isabel, Mary, Elizabeth
- **Sarah Crawford**, m. cousin Robert Crawford (son of Alexander)
    - Children: George, Elizabeth, Hugh, James, Jane, Robert, William, John

---

5. Patrick Crawford & Sarah Wilson

Born: In Ireland; to PA and then Augusta Co., VA (~1750)
Children:

Daughters:

- **Martha Crawford**, bap. 1748, likely died young
- **Elizabeth Crawford** (b. Oct. 18, 1751), m. Alexander Robertson
- **Peggy Crawford**, m. John Crawford (son of George)
- **Unnamed Daughter**, m. James McChesney; had son George
- **Martha Crawford** (b. May 10, 1761), m. Col. Andrew Anderson (his 2nd wife)
- **Mary Crawford**, m. Dec. 30, 1786, James Crawford (son of George)

Sons:

- **George Crawford** (b. Oct. 1, 1754), m. Nancy Winter (dau. of William & Anne Boone Winter)
    - Children: Nancy (m. John Miller), Hannah (m. Harry Miller), Sarah (m. James Bell), Jane (m. Franklin McCue), Martha (m. Peter Hanger), Polly (m. James Hourland), Peggy (m. James Walker)
- **Maj. John Crawford** (b. Mar. 29, 1764), m. July 5, 1790, Rebecca Allen (daughter of Capt. James)
    - Children: Elizabeth (m. Capt. William Ingles), Sarah (m. John Hyde), Margaret (m. Cyrus Hyde), James (m. Cynthia McClung), John (m. Harriet McClung), George W. (never married), Ann (m. Franklin McCue), Mary (m. Edward Moorman), Rebecca (m. Stewart McClung)
- **William Crawford** (b. Aug. 6, 1767), m. Nancy Smith (daughter of Abraham Smith)
    - Children: Benjamin (m. Magdalena Cochran), James (never married), John (m. Mary Allen), George, William, and six unnamed daughters
        - Benjamin’s children: Elizabeth, James, Nancy (m. Col. James Crawford of Culpeper), Addison, Benjamin
- **James Crawford** (b. Aug. 6, 1757), m. — McClung (of Greenbrier)
    - Children: John H. (m. Mrs. Trirkle, née Rice), William (m. Miss McChesney), Edward (m. daughter of William Crawford), James (removed to Texas), Marshall (m. daughter of Alexander Crawford of Crawford Springs)

This article offers a wealth of information about the early Crawford families of Augusta County, Virginia, and their migrations into Kentucky, Ohio, and Missouri. By organizing the data into family groups, we can better visualize relationships and track patterns across generations. While I’ve done my best to interpret and structure the material accurately, the original source remains elusive. If you recognize this article or have access to *Miami Valley Genealogies, Vol. 2: Families A–K*, I would greatly appreciate any insight or confirmation you can provide. Sharing and preserving these records helps all of us build a more complete picture of our shared past.

Friday Find

By Marcia Crawford Philbrick
June 27, 2025
Mentzer,Ricketts,Woodson_County
https://heartlandgenealogy.org/2025/06/27/friday-find-84/

FRIDAY FINDS
FRIDAY FINDS
HEARTLAND GENEALOGY BLOG

Today's Friday Find comes from a set of Woodson County, Kansas records generously transcribed by researcher Betty J. Wasmer. Her work includes details from the county's birth, death, and marriage indexes—valuable resources for anyone tracing early Kansas families. Below is a the birth entries she recorded, offering a glimpse into several generations of the Mentzer, Wells, and related families.

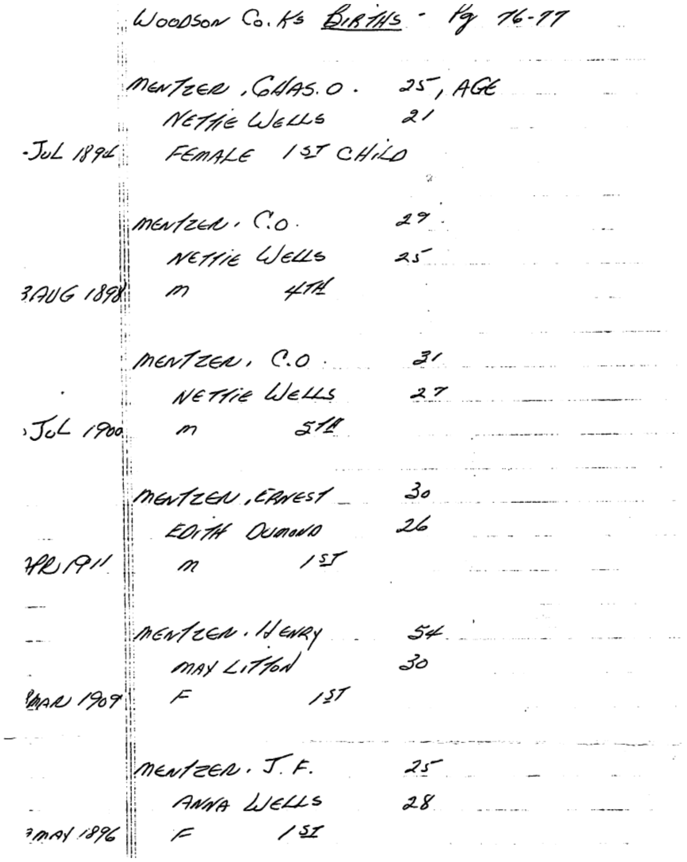
Birth Records Transcribed by Betty J. Wasmer (Woodson County, Kansas):

1. **Father:** Mentzer, Chas. O. (age 25)
   Mother: Nettie Wells (age 21)
   Date: July 1892
   Sex: Female
   Child Number: 1st
2. **Father:** Mentzer, C.O. (age 27)
   Mother: Nettie Wells (age 25)
   Date: August 3, 1894
   Sex: Male
   Child Number: 4th
3. **Father:** Mentzer, C.O. (age 31)
   Mother: Nettie Wells (age 27)
   Date: July 1900
   Sex: Male

Child Number: 5th

4. **Father:** Mentzer, Ernest (age 30)
   Mother: Edith Dumond (age 26)
   Date: February 1911
   Sex: Male
   Child Number: 1st
5. **Father:** Mentzer, Henry (age 54)
   Mother: May Litton (age 30)
   Date: January 1907
   Sex: Female
   Child Number: 1st
6. **Father:** Mentzer, J.F. (age 25)
   Mother: Anna Wells (age 28)
   Date: May 7, 1896
   Sex: Female
   Child Number: 1st
7. **Father:** Mentzer, J.F. (age 26)
   Mother: Anna Wells (age 28)
   Date: November 6, 1897
   Sex: Female
   Child Number: 2nd
8. **Father:** Mentzer, J.F.
   Mother: Anna Wells
   Date: April 1899
   Sex: Female
   Child Number: 3rd
9. **Father:** Mentzer, J.F.
   Mother: Anna Wells
   Date: September 1901
   Sex: Female
   Child Number: 4th
10. **Father:** Mentzer, J.F.
    Mother: Anna Wells
    Date: January 1904
    Sex: Male
    Child Number: 5th or 6th
11. **Father:** Mentzer, J.F.
    Mother: Anna Wells
    Date: October 1906
    Sex: ?
    Child Number: 7th
12. **Father:** Mentzer, J.F.
    Mother: Anna Wells
    Date: June 1909
    Sex: Female
    Child Number: 8th
13. **Father:** Ricketts, D.C. (age 28)
    Mother: Anna Myers (age 19)
    Date: September 2, 1905
    Sex: Female
    Child Number: 1st
    Notes: Vernon, KS
14. **Father:** Ricketts, D.C.
    Mother: Anna Myers
    Date: October 1910
    Sex: Male
    Child Number: 2nd

Notes: Possibly Stubbs?



WOODSON CO. KS BIRTHS - Pg 76-77

MENTZER, CHAS. O. 25, AGE
NETTIE WELLS 21
JUL 1896 FEMALE 1ST CHILD

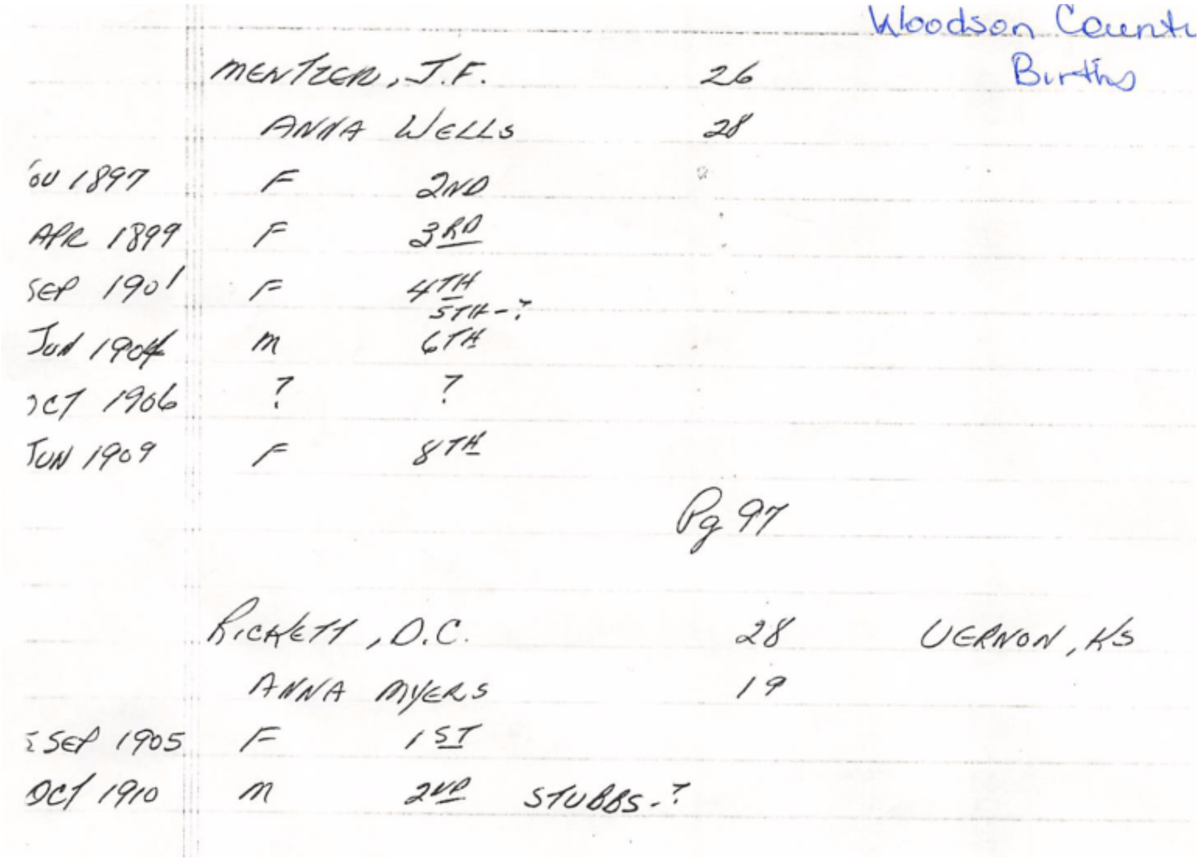
MENTZER. C.O. 27
NETTIE WELLS 25
3AUG 1898 M 4TH

MENTZER, C.O 31
NETTIE WELLS 27
JUL 1900 M 5TH

MENTZER, ERNEST 30
EDITH OUMOND 26
PR 1911 M 1ST

MENTZER. HENRY 54
MAY LITTON 30
MAR 1909 F 1ST

MENTZER. J. F. 25
ANNA WELLS 28
MAY 1896 F 1ST



Woodson County Births

MENTZER, J.F. 26
ANNA WELLS 28
OV 1897 F 2ND
APR 1899 F 3RD
SEP 1901 F 4TH
5TH - ?
JUN 1904 M 6TH
CT 1906 ? ?
JUN 1909 F 8TH

Pg 97

RICKETT, O.C. 28 VERNON, KS
ANNA MYERS 19
SEP 1905 F 1ST
OCT 1910 M 2ND STUBBS - ?

While many more resources are now available online, I remain deeply grateful that Betty took the time to research and preserve these local records for me. If you have access to family records, local indexes, or community transcriptions, consider sharing them—you never know whose family story you might help uncover.

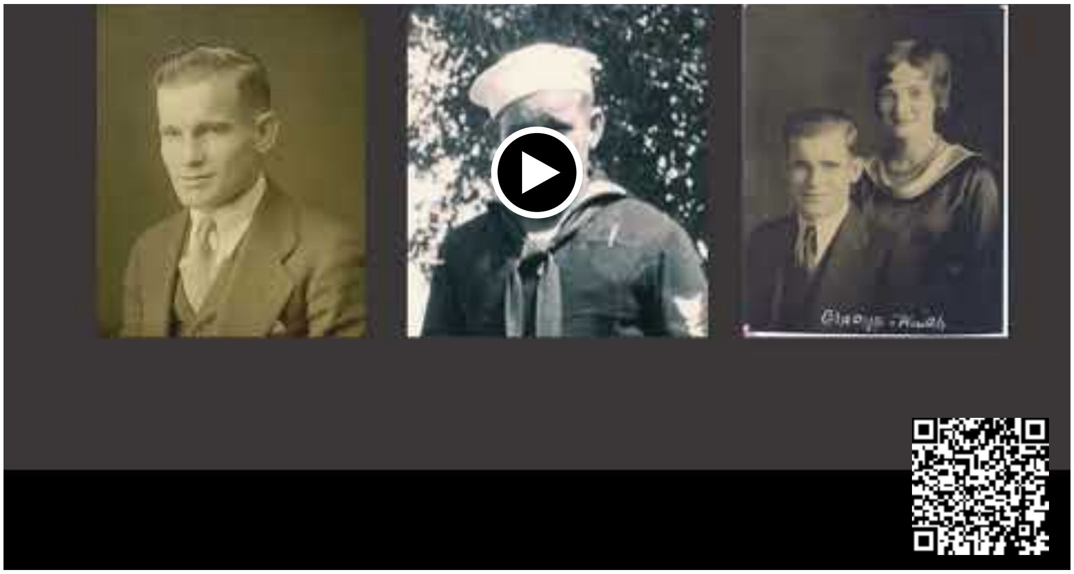
Overview of Hugh Judson Crawford’s Life

By Marcia Crawford Philbrick
June 28, 2025
Artificial Intelligence,Crawford
https://heartlandgenealogy.org/2025/06/28/overview-of-hugh-judson-crawfords-life/

HEARTLAND
GENEALOGY
CRAWFORD
FAMILY

Take a few minutes to enjoy this video overview of Hugh Judson Crawford’s life. It was created using Google NotebookLM and is based on a detailed narrative report generated with RootsMagic.

https://youtube.com/watch?v=gvr4yo2D8Ww



Stories like Hugh’s remind us why preserving family history matters. Thank you for watching and keeping these memories alive.

Saturday Night Genealogy Fun

By Marcia Crawford Philbrick
June 29, 2025
Briles,SaturdayNightGenealogyFun
https://heartlandgenealogy.org/2025/06/29/saturday-night-genealogy-fun-160/

Calling all Genea-Musings Fans:

It's Saturday Night again –

Time for some more Genealogy Fun!!

Your mission, should you decide to accept it (cue the Mission Impossible! music) is to:

1) FamilySearch has a page for "Famous Relatives" at https://www.familysearch.org/en/discovery/famousrelatives. It works if you are connected to the FamilySearch Family Tree.

2) Check out the website. Which connection surprises you? Do you believe that the connection is correct?

While I didn't look at every individual in my "Famous Relatives" list on FamilySearch, I reviewed all the leaders and browsed through several in each of the other categories. Unsurprisingly, nearly all of my connections trace back to my New England lines — and not through shared surnames.

One surprise was discovering a connection to President Lyndon B. Johnson. This line runs through my Nafus branch back to Cornelius Barentsen Slecht, who immigrated to America around 1652. Cornelius is part of one of my several Dutch lines.

An even bigger surprise was finding a possible connection to Martin Luther. According to FamilySearch, my line goes:

- Through my BRILES line to Conrad Broyles' mother, Ursula Roup
- Through the Roup line to Ursula's grandfather, Peter Roup
- From Peter Roup's mother, Maria Ursula Brenner, to her mother Katharina Luther
- Then from Katharina Luther to her grandfather — Martin Luther himself

If correct, this would make **Martin Luther** my 13th great-grandfather.

But is it accurate? The line is well-documented up through Ursula Roup, but beyond that, I haven't verified the connections using German records. Without those sources, I can't confirm whether the ancestral links back to Martin Luther are reliable.

The above was written on Saturday evening to be posted on Sunday morning.

On Sunday morning, I decided to use ChatGPT to learn more about this possible connection to Martin Luther and a possible Lutheran heritage. Below is my conversation.

> A Van Bruhl descendant migrated to the US in the 1700s settling in the Germanna colony of Virginia. Descendants go by the surname Broyles or Briles. Was this family Lutheran?

Yes — the Van Bruhl / Broyles / Briles family that settled at the Germanna Colony in Virginia in the early 1700s were indeed Lutheran.

Here's some background and context:

German origins and migration

- The **Broyles (originally Breyel, Brühl, or similar)** family came from the area near Ötisheim and Dühren in Baden-Württemberg, Germany.
- In 1717, a group of German families (including the Broyles) arrived in Virginia as part of the **Second Germanna Colony**, led by Governor Alexander Spotswood to work at his ironworks and to strengthen the frontier.

Religious affiliation

- These settlers were **mostly Lutheran**, reflecting the dominant faith in their home regions of southwestern Germany at that time.
- The Germanna community is well documented as having Lutheran roots, although they were often served by itinerant pastors, and over time some families later joined other Protestant denominations (like Reformed or Methodist congregations), especially as they migrated south into North Carolina and Tennessee.

Name changes

- The original spelling (Brühl) was gradually Anglicized to Broyles, and then some lines in North Carolina and further south began using **Briles**.

Supporting records

- Surviving records from Germanna and later Virginia and North Carolina settlements, including wills, land records, and church records, often refer to Lutheran practices (such as baptisms and communion lists).
- The Germanna Foundation and various published genealogies confirm this Lutheran heritage.

Summary: The Van Bruhl / Broyles / Briles family in Germanna were indeed Lutheran when they arrived and for at least the first few generations in America.

> Ursula Roup was the mother of Conrad Broyles (Briles) when they immigrated to Virginia. How is she related to Martin Luther?

Who was Ursula Roup?

- Ursula **Roup** (sometimes spelled Raup or Rupp) was married to **Johannes Broyles** (also known as Hans Jacob Broyles/Breil), and they were the parents of **Conrad Broyles (Briles)** who came to Virginia with the 1717 Germanna Colony.
- Ursula was born in Germany, likely in the Baden-Württemberg region.

Claimed connection to Martin Luther

You may have seen or heard a claim that Ursula Roup's maternal line descends from Martin Luther (1483–1546), the German Reformer. The supposed lineage often goes something like this:

1. **Martin Luther** had children, including a daughter Margarethe Luther.
2. Margarethe married Georg von Kunheim, and they had descendants.
3. Some claim that a daughter or granddaughter from this line married into the Roup (Rupp) family, eventually leading to Ursula.

What do historical records show?

✅ Martin Luther's daughter **Margarethe Luther von Kunheim** did have children, and some of their lines are documented.

❌ However, there is **no solid documented evidence** (in contemporary church, civil, or family records) connecting those Kunheim descendants to the Roup family or to Ursula Roup.

- German church and civil records for Ursula’s family do not show a connection to the Kunheims.
- This story appears to have originated in **early 20th-century genealogies**, sometimes based on oral tradition or compiled family trees that lacked primary source citations.

Conclusion

- **Ursula Roup was not a documented descendant of Martin Luther.**
- As far as reliable evidence goes today, there is **no proven genealogical connection** between Martin Luther and the Broyles/Briles family via Ursula Roup.

Why the confusion persists

- Many early American family histories wished to connect to prominent European figures (like Martin Luther) as a mark of distinction.
- Once published, these claims tended to spread and get repeated without verification.

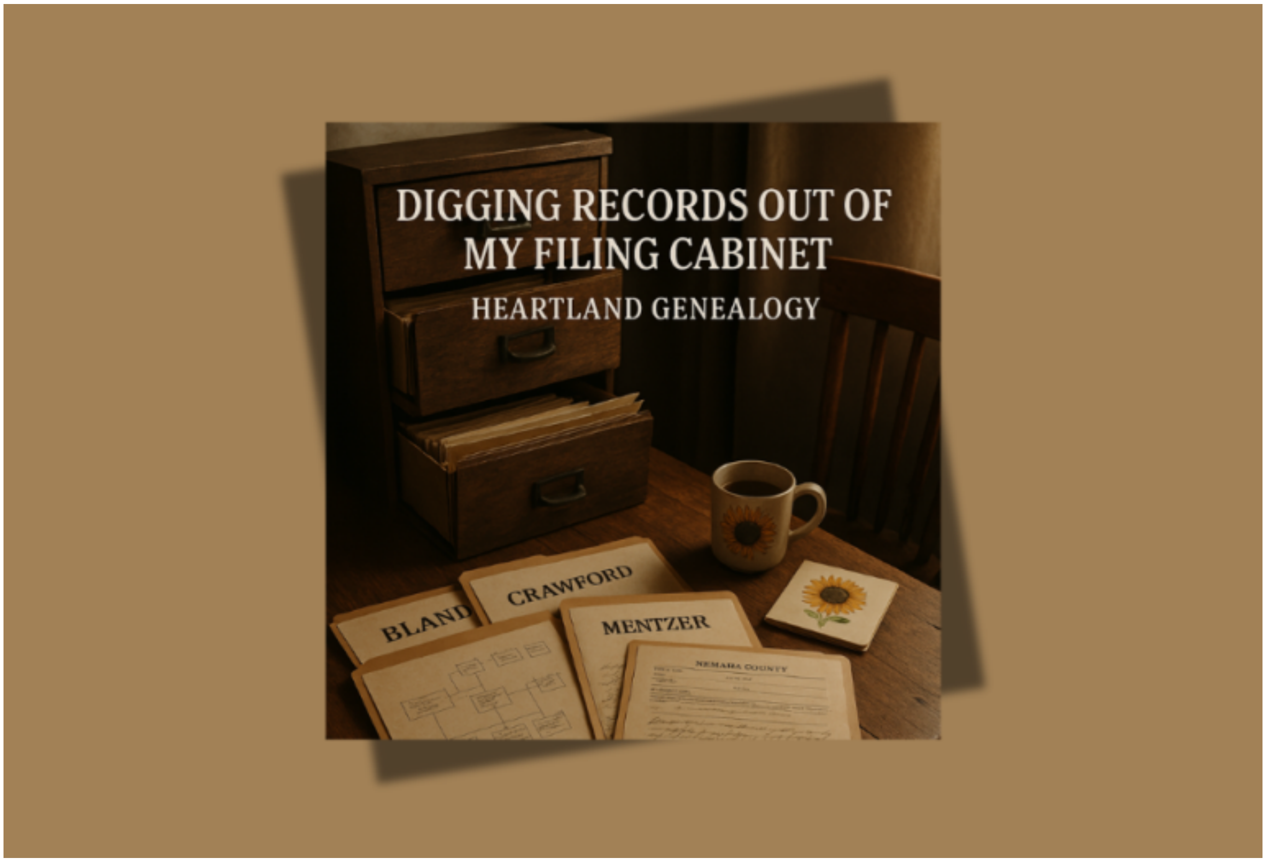
Final summary

✅ Ursula Roup was the mother of Conrad Broyles/Briles.
❌ There is **no documented connection** between Ursula Roup and Martin Luther.

So, which is correct? The FamilySearch tree or the information provided by ChatGPT. For now, I have to side with ChatGPT.

Monday’s Diggings

By Marcia Crawford Philbrick
June 30, 2025
Briles
https://heartlandgenealogy.org/2025/06/30/mondays-diggings-4/



Today’s discovery from my Briles letter collection is a gem—a heartfelt letter from Mildred Briles Barby. Mildred, my third cousin twice removed, was not only a dedicated family historian but also a passionate Briles researcher. Below is a full transcription of her letter, rich with personal reflections and genealogical insights.

> Dear Marcia,
>
> I write with a very sad heart. I never had the privilege to see your grandmother, Pauline, however, I did talk to her several times on the phone.
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> She was just going to the phone to call a taxi to go to the doctor. She didn’t have much time because of her appointment. We didn’t realize we’d not have another chance to meet her. I am really sad about this. We also regret her passing.
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> We visited with Lulu (Briles) Cope on our way to the Briles Reunion at Le Roy, Kans (Aug 12th). We ask[ed] several at Yates Center where Lula lived. We found her at the Senior Citizen Center.
> I had never met her before, so we got acquainted. She is lots of fun and we had a good time. She said she was Pauline’s sister-in-law and also that Pauline had passed away. I was shocked! I know you are heartbroken, too. We are so sorry.
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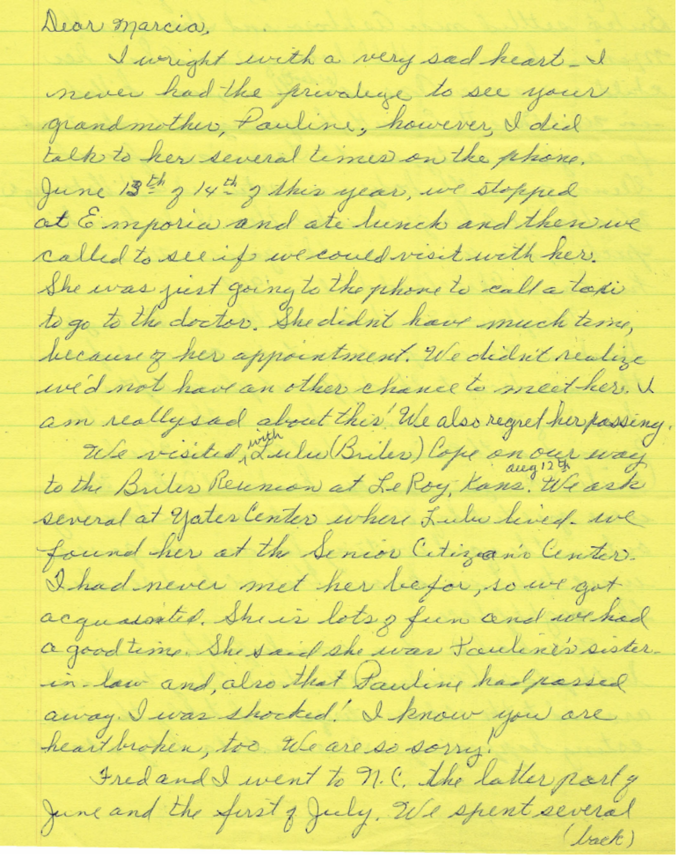

Dear Marcia,

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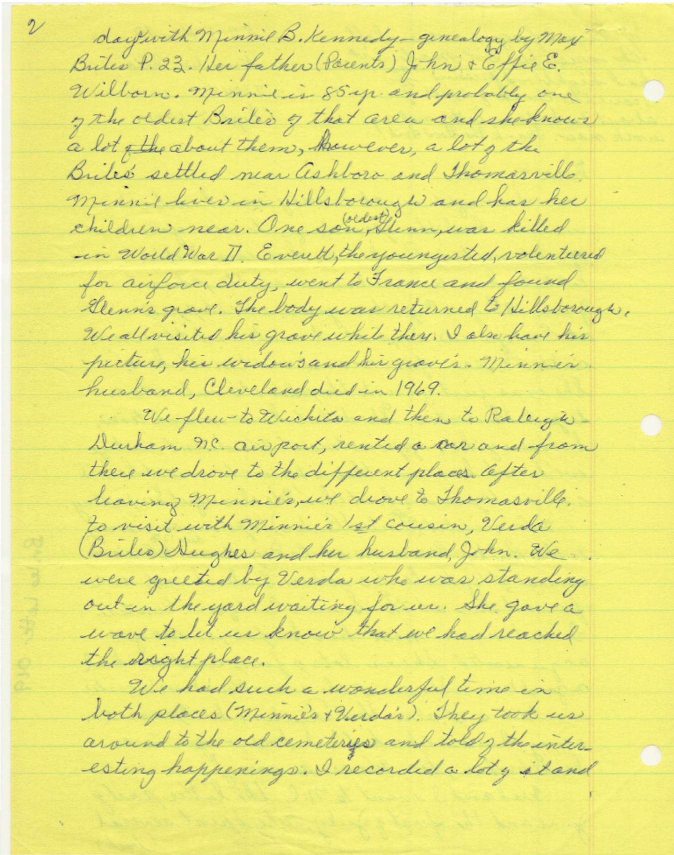
days with Minnie B. Kennedy — genealogy by Max Briles p. 23. Her father (parents) John & Effie E. Wilborn. Minnie is 85 yrs. and probably one of the oldest Briles of that area and she knows a lot of the about them. However, a lot of the Briles settled near Asheboro and Thomasville.
Minnie lives in Hillsborough and has her children near. One son (oldest) Glenn, was killed in World War II. Eaverett, the youngest, volunteered for airforce duty, went to France and found Glenn's grave. The body was returned to Hillsborough. We all visited his grave while there. I also have his picture, his widow's and his grave's. Minnie's husband, Cleveland, died in 1969.

We flew to Wichita and then to Raleigh Durham N.C. airport, rented a car and from there we drove to the different places. After leaving Minnie, we drove to Thomasville to visit with Minnie's 1st cousin, Verda (Briles) Hughes and her husband, John. We were greeted by Verda who was standing out in the yard waiting for us. She gave a wave to let us know that we had reached the right place.

We had such a wonderful time in both places (Minnie's & Verda's). They took us around to the old cemeteries and told the interesting happenings. I recorded a lot of it and..



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Minnie has a niece at Box 2 – Pomona, Ks. 66076
Her name is Beth Gentry – a little younger than I. I am almost 61. Dec. 24th

took many pictures of old head stones with our relatives names, dates, etc. on them. We came close to the Hoover Gold MInebut never got up real close. It is at the foot of Shepherd Mt. I believe I sent you a will (North Srs.) where the gold mine was mentioned; if not I have one for you and other writings I got at Asheboro Records Society. I am including what I got there with this letter.

Verda & John have no children. (she 77 yr John 78yr) She is a retired school teacher and has written a book called *"Poplar Ridge of Randolph Co."*
Would you like a copy of it? This Records Society at Asheboro has them to sell. Let me know. It is a small book with pictures. Verda, Minnie, and other relatives.

Radie Skeen met us at Mt. Gilead Cemetery. She's 1st cousin to Verda and Minnie's her aunt. Radie's mother (Winnie p. 23) was an older sister of Minnie's. Verda and John took us to 4 cemeteries and there the Briles and Hoover's names stood out everywhere.

John is such a jolly man and we enjoyed his stories, jokes and good humor. Verda said, shedidn't know

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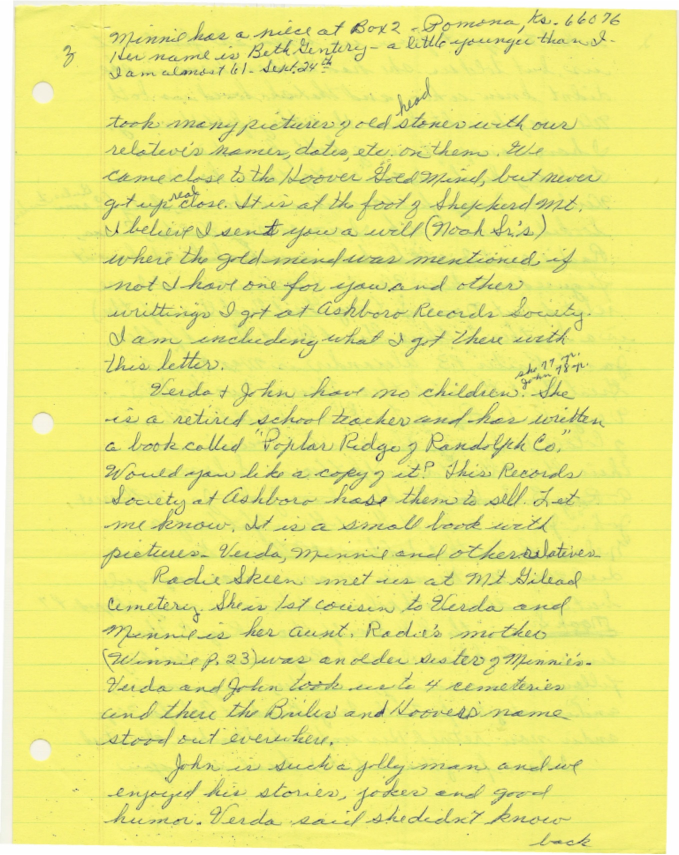

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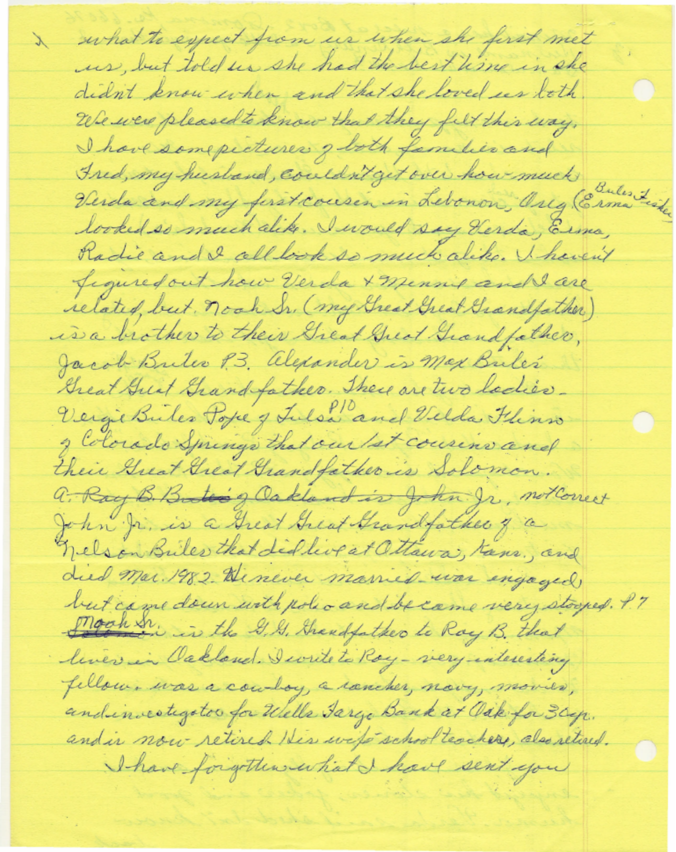
I have some pictures of both families and Fred, my husband, couldn't get over how much Verda and my first cousins in Lebanon, Oreg, (Erma Briles Fisher) looked so much alike. I would say Verda, Erma, Radie and I all look so much alike. I haven't figured out how Verda & I are related, but Noah Sr. (my Great Great Grandfather) is a brother to their Great Great Grandfather, Jacob Briles P.3. Alexander is Max Briles' Great Great Grandfather. There are two ladies, Vergie Briles Pope of Tulsa, OK and Velda Flinn of Colorado Springs that our 1st cousins and their Great Great Grandfather is Solomon.

~~A. Ray B. [Briles] of Oakland is John Jr.~~, not correct. John Jr. is a Great Great Grandfather of a Nelson Briles that did live at Ottawa, Ks., and died Mar. 1982. He never married, was engaged, but came down with polio and became very stooped. p7 Noah Sr is the G.G. Grandfather to Roy B. that lives in Oakland. I write to Roy, very interesting fellow, was a cowboy, rancher, navy, movies, and investigator for Wells Fargo Bank at oak for 30 yr and is now retired, his wife a school teacher, also retired.

I have forgotten what I have sent you.



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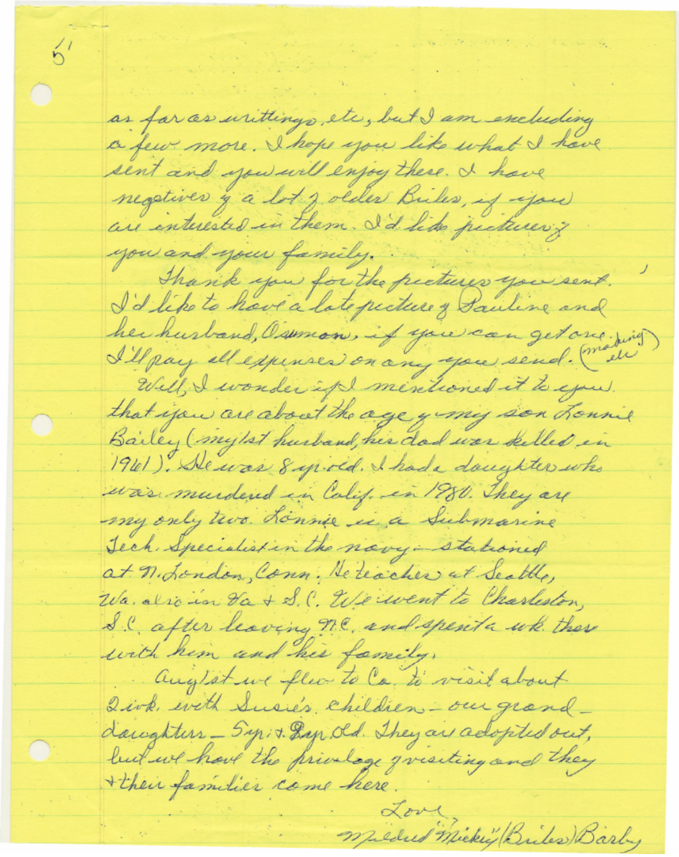
Thank you for the pictures you sent. I'd like to have a late picture of Pauline and her husband, Osman, if you can get one. I'll pay all expenses on one you send. *(mailing, etc.)*

Well, I wonder if I mentioned it to you, that you are about the age of my son Lonnie Bailey (my 1st husband, his dad, was killed in 1961). He was 8 yr old. I had a daughter who was murdered in Calif. in 1980. They are my only two. Ronnie is in a Submarine Tech. Specialist in the Navy — stationed at N. London, Conn. He teaches at Seattle, Wa. also in Va & S.C.. We went to Charleston, S.C. after leaving N.C. and spent a wk. there with him and his family.

Aug 1st we flew to Ca. to visit about 2 wks. with Susie's children — our grand-daughters — 5 yr & 9 yr old. They are adopted out, but we have the privilege of visiting and they & their families come here.

Love,
Mildred "Mickey" (Briles) Barby



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Love,
Mildred "Mickey" (Briles) Bailey

Mildred's letter is a touching reminder of the importance of preserving family stories and making connections across generations. I'm grateful for her dedication to documenting our Briles heritage—and for the personal glimpse into her life and research journey. If you're connected to the Briles family or have memories of Mildred, I'd love to hear from you in the comments.